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Sports Illustrated and the Cold War

A History Honors Project

By Nick Ellingson

Introduction

The Cold War, which lasted for most of the second half of the twentieth century, was a period of conflict and competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. After World War II, these two countries emerged as the dominant superpowers in the world and a rivalry quickly formed. At the heart of this conflict was a disagreement over ideological systems between the United States and capitalism versus the Soviet Union and communism. The threat of nuclear war loomed large over this period and helped to discourage any direct military conflict with each other. However, the USA and the USSR competed against each other in other ways, and one of these ways was through international athletic competition and the Olympics. This new battleground for the two superpowers had many effects on the athletic and Olympic landscape. The decline of amateurism in the Olympics, the increased importance of women's sports in America, and the increased politicization of the Olympics were all trends driven, in part, by Cold War rivalries. To examine the relationship between sports and the Cold War, this paper will examine the magazine *Sports Illustrated* during this period. *Sports Illustrated's* reporting throughout the Cold War shows an anti-Soviet slant, which shows that Cold War rhetoric and propaganda permeated through many areas of US culture. The anti-Soviet rhetoric used in *Sports Illustrated* also shows the importance of sports in the Cold War as a way for each nation to measure which country was superior. *Sports Illustrated* had a unique perspective because it reported on one of the few places where Americans and Soviets actually competed against each other directly.

One of the most important aspects of the Cold War was the constant threat of nuclear war, which decreased the willingness to go to war but also increased paranoia. The Americans developed the first nuclear bomb under the Manhattan Project, but Stalin then developed his own

successful nuclear bomb project.¹ This arms race, which continued through the 1950s, made the fear of nuclear war become more prevalent.² However, millions of people would die in a nuclear war and the threat of mass destruction helped curb any desires to launch a nuclear strike by either country.³

As the Cold War began to escalate, *Sports Illustrated* was founded and developed during a time of growing consumption and leisure time in the USA. After WWII, the American economy was going through a period of great prosperity that helped give rise to a larger middle class, a higher standard of living, and a consumption community.⁴ As incomes rose and more products became available, people were given a choice between more income and more leisure, where people increasingly began to choose more leisure time. This choice created a trend towards shorter work weeks, paid vacations, and sabbaticals as people increasingly used their income to supplement their leisure activities. During the 1950s and 1960s, a larger portion of income began to go to leisure or leisure related expenditures such as: sporting goods, camping equipment, travel, and admission to games, shows and events. These leisure activities arose not only because of greater incomes, but also because of a greater variety of choice in how people wanted to spend their leisure time.⁵ *Sports Illustrated* was created in the midst of this developing consumer culture as a magazine devoted to leisure time. Not only did *Sports Illustrated* focus on competitive sports, but it also focused on travel, camping, sailing and other leisure activities, which likely reflected the growing leisure culture in America.

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 26.

² Ibid., 70.

³ Ibid., 66.

⁴ Daniel J. Boorstin, "The Consumption Community," from *The Consuming Public*, Vol. 40, No. 3, Grant S. McClellan, ed., (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1968), 9-13.

⁵ Lawrence A. Mayer, "The Mass High-Income Consumers," from *The Consuming Public*, Vol. 40, No. 3, Grant S. McClellan, ed., (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1968), 24-32.

The rise of *Sports Illustrated* came during a time when the purchasing power of American youth began to grow. During the 1950s and 1960s, the growing affluence of young people created a commercial youth market and developed a youth culture based around the consumption of commercial goods that fed into a wider mass culture. Along with more economic prosperity, wartime increases in birth rate created a postwar baby boom that increased the number of youths in the market. During the 1950s and 1960s, the teen population grew from about 10-15 million to 20 million, and in the 1960s, the number of people aged 18-24 grew from 16 million to 25 million. Not only were there more young people to buy products, but they also enjoyed some economic prosperity as many had been forced to work during WWII. Young people thus became a separate and distinct group within society and enjoyed a greater degree of freedom and independence than previous generations.⁶

The growing youth culture and youth market meant there was more youth spending and spending on youths. The trend of a rising youth commercial market and the growing prosperity of the middle class meant that newspapers and magazines had many opportunities for success. In a time with little TV, magazines were a good way to stay connected and provide entertainment. *Sports Illustrated*, a magazine geared towards leisure time and youth culture, had good potential to develop into a prosperous magazine when one takes into account the growing prosperity of American youths and the trend towards increased leisure.⁷

Sports Illustrated was born in an era when spectator sports were starting to develop and gain more popularity in America, which is one reason why the early focus on leisure activities was so important. However, multiple events during 1954 created an environment where

⁶ Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America*, (New York: Berg Publishers, 2001), 88-95.

⁷ Ibid., 95-115.

spectator sports and a magazine based on them could thrive. Two important factors were that RCA introduced the first color TV sets and the Boeing 707 was launched, which made it easier for teams to travel coast to coast thus allowing for truly national leagues.⁸

Sports Illustrated's conception came after the realization that there were only a handful of sports magazines with good reputations and none of them had circulations over 1,000,000. The idea was that because of no real competition in a weekly field and an increase in postwar leisure time, spending, and TV, the sports profile would grow enough to warrant a weekly magazine.⁹ The first issue, in 1954, carried 74 pages of advertisements, which created revenues of over \$1.3 million and 90% of the issues were sold during the first day. However, many readers complained that "SI was for the 'martini set' rather than for the 'beer and pretzel gang,'"¹⁰ meaning that it focused more on upper class sports like yachting, hunting and cards instead of spectator sports.

As successful as the first issue was, the 74 pages of ads in it made up ¼ of the entire year's ad pages, and *Sports Illustrated* fell short of its ad target for the year by almost 200 pages.¹¹ *Sports Illustrated* was selling two things: timely sports reporting and color pictures, but it required six weeks of lead time to process color pictures and so these two elements could not be mixed. The color pictures it did run were impressive though because of *Sports Illustrated's* focus on recruiting talented photographers and the fact that before *Sports Illustrated*, color sports photography was a barren field. The first breakthrough in this field occurred in 1955 when the Bell and Howell's Photon, a camera, was released, which, because of its motor drive and zoom

⁸ Michael MaCambridge, *The Franchise: A History of Sports Illustrated Magazine*, (New York: Hyperion Books, 1998), 1-10.

⁹ Ibid., 13-28.

¹⁰ Ibid., 63.

¹¹ Ibid., 64.

lens capacity, was great for sports photography. Within the first year of *Sports Illustrated's* life it became clear what the magazine's strengths and weaknesses were. It had more color than any other sports magazine, but there was a lack of logical approach to news coverage, lack of coherent perspective on each sport and too much focus on high income past times. The magazine was also losing a lot of money.¹²

The magazine's fortunes began to turn around because of a slew of new hires, which contributed to a better grounding in spectator sports.¹³ During the magazine's second full year, circulation increased to 600,000 and the ad department brought in about 1,100 pages of ads, but the magazine was still losing money. Andre Laguerre, the Assistant Managing Editor, then decided and told each writer that they had to focus more on content and that each story must be justified by its journalistic value. Over the next few years, the magazine began to have a more consistent vision about spectator sports. By 1958, the magazine had begun to cover baseball and college football much more thoroughly, while also beginning to recognize the importance of professional football.¹⁴

1960 was a watershed year for both sports and *Sports Illustrated*. Arnold Palmer was solidified as a star, America got its first glimpse of Cassius Clay at the Rome Olympics, and the NFL hired Pete Rozelle as commissioner. Also, ABC producer Roone Arledge supervised his first live sports telecast, which included new theatrical elements that brought televised sports into the modern era, including field level microphones, roving cameras, close-ups, and many other new techniques. All of these things helped increase America's interest in spectator sports. At

¹² Ibid., 63-69.

¹³ Ibid., 66-92.

¹⁴ Ibid., 93-97.

the same time, *Sports Illustrated* lowered its subscription price and circulation neared the 1,000,000 mark.¹⁵

Laguerre, now in charge of *Sports Illustrated*, changed the format of the magazine, orienting editors by sport, which increased expertise in each sport. The quality of writing at the magazine was also improving as writers began to focus more on spectator sports.¹⁶ *Sports Illustrated* ran ten professional football stories in 1956, and by the mid-1960s they were writing 30 each year. However, *Sports Illustrated* still needed to increase its advertisement revenue to remain competitive, and it did this by beginning to sell the magazine as a news weekly rather than as a leisure magazine. *Sports Illustrated* was now competing with *Time* and *Newsweek* instead of *Playboy*, *National Geographic* and *Esquire*. This shift resulted in *Sports Illustrated* turning its first profit in 1964.¹⁷ Under Laguerre, *Sports Illustrated* also started experimenting with offset printing in 1965, which led to faster color printing. This practice progressed rapidly; in 1965, they ran 38 pages of fast color compared to 200 by 1967. The ability to quickly print in color allowed the magazine to merge the best color with the latest news.¹⁸ Laguerre's high standards and an infusion of influential Texas sportswriters made *Sports Illustrated* emerge as an innovative magazine, and by the late 1960s, it was a top 10 magazine in the country based on ad pages and ad revenue.¹⁹ In February 1974, Roy Terrell replaced Laguerre as Managing Editor at *Sports Illustrated*, but under Laguerre's leadership the magazine's annual ad base had grown from \$11.9 to \$72.2 million and its circulation had risen from 900,000 to 2,250,000.²⁰ The

¹⁵ Ibid., 98-103.

¹⁶ Ibid., 104.

¹⁷ Ibid., 129-130.

¹⁸ Ibid., 140-141.

¹⁹ Ibid., 128.

²⁰ Ibid., 196-198.

growth of *Sports Illustrated*'s circulation displays not only the growing popularity of the magazine but also reflects the growing consumer and leisure culture.

When Roy Terrell took over as Managing Editor for *Sports Illustrated*, he changed the magazine's focus to give more emphasis to sweat-sports, meaning the two footballs (college and professional), two basketballs (college and professional), boxing, baseball, and track and field.²¹ These sports had started to become very popular thanks to increased television and magazine exposure and they became almost like a religion with extremely passionate and loyal fans.²²

Most historians, when examining the explosion of spectator sports that reshaped America's leisure time, point to two things: economic prosperity and the advent of television. However, *Sports Illustrated* was also very important to this transition to spectator sports. *Sports Illustrated* helped set the agenda about what sports were important, and in that way it shaped much of the TV revolution. The magazine also reimagined a world where sports were not just a pastime but a central component of life, and because of this they were able to find an audience that had not been thought to exist prior to *Sports Illustrated*'s conception.²³ This point was summed up by Ray Cave, a protégé of Laguerre's, who said, "I think, over the years, it did something that Luce had in mind right from the beginning, it legitimized sports. We've seen sport, the role of sport in society, change tremendously through the years. And the existence of SI played a significant role in that change... all of the sudden, you could read a sports magazine, and still be considered able to read, for starters."²⁴

²¹ Ibid., 200-210.

²² Michael Novak, "A Holy Trinity," *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-), Vol. 3, No. 3 (Summer, 1979), 74-84.

²³ MacCambridge, *The Franchise*, 1-4.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

While *Sports Illustrated* continued to increase in popularity and profitability in the 1980s, the Cold War was beginning to come to an end. After Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he introduced policies of glasnost and perestroika, or openness and economic restructuring. Realizing the poor state of the Russian economy, Gorbachev reduced Soviet troop strength and began making concessions to the Americans, which basically ended the arms race. In 1988, Gorbachev said that he would no longer enforce the Brezhnev Doctrine, meaning that satellite countries in Eastern Europe were able to defect from the Soviet sphere of influence. Democratic movements began to emerge throughout Eastern Europe in 1989 as countries started defecting from the USSR. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall, one of the greatest symbols of the Cold War, was torn down. Germany was reunified in 1990 and the Cold War effectively came to an end, however, the USSR did not fall until 1991.²⁵

While the Cold War did not see the USA and USSR meet on the battlefield, the two countries competed in other ways. From 1952-1988, the USA and USSR developed an athletic rivalry as sports became a symbolic struggle between capitalism and communism. The nuclear arms race turned into a medal race as each country tried to beat the other in total medal count at the Olympics.²⁶ International athletics became a proxy war between the USA and the USSR. While fighting a proxy war through international competition went against the Olympics' guiding principle of fostering international peace, politics had often played a role in the

²⁵ "New Thinking: Foreign Policy Under Gorbachev," US Library of Congress, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/17.htm>

²⁶ Allen Guttman, "Cold War and the Olympics," *International Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Sport in World Politics (Autumn, 1988), 554-568.

Olympics.²⁷ The Olympics provided a way to display a nation's prestige and power, thus providing ample reason for the USA and USSR to focus on international athletics so greatly. The Olympics provided a way to show the entire world which country was better and thus which ideology was superior.²⁸ *Sports Illustrated* wrote extensively about the Cold War athletic rivalry between the USA and USSR. Since *Sports Illustrated* devoted so much coverage to international competition, the magazine provides a good way to study the Cold War's effects on athletics.

Sports Illustrated provides an example of the anti-Soviet bias that permeated American culture during the Cold War as the magazine's rhetoric portrayed Soviet ideals negatively while favoring American ones. *Sports Illustrated*, as a widely read publication, thus frames the public's perception of the Soviet Union and communism by using anti-Soviet rhetoric. Sports provided a good arena for the two countries to battle separate from military conflict because of the emotions that sports elicit in people. In the words of President Ford, "a sports triumph can be as uplifting to a nation's spirit as well as a battlefield victory."²⁹ Sports were being used as a tool for achieving goals that could otherwise only be achieved through war.

Chapter 1 of this project discusses the rhetoric used in *Sports Illustrated* as related to the Soviet Union, Soviet athletes, Soviet athletic program, and communism. *Sports Illustrated* placed itself at the center of Cold War athletic rivalries by disfavoring Soviet ideals and portraying Soviet athletes as different from American ones. *Sports Illustrated*'s coverage of Soviet athletics during the Cold War was mostly consistent as the magazine portrayed the Soviet Union and its athletic program as controlling and oppressive. The magazine portrayed the Soviet

²⁷ Basil A. Ince, "Nationalism and Cold War Politics at the Pan American Games: Cuba, the United State and Puerto Rico," *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1/2 (Jan-June, 1994), 65-84.

²⁸ Wilfrid Sheed, "Why Sports Matter," *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-), Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter, 1995), 11-25.

²⁹ George H. Sage, *Power and Ideology in American Sport: A Critical Perspective*, (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books, 1990,) 80-81.

athletes as a product of the oppressive Soviet society as the athletes were depicted as emotionless, secretive and focused only on winning. However, during the 1980s, *Sports Illustrated* began to frame Soviet athletes as trapped in an oppressive system rather than as joyless and robotic contributors to that system.

Chapter 2 discusses trends in women's athletics that were affected by the Cold War. US women's athletics developed during the Cold War because of the women's liberation movement, successful female athletes, Title IX and the desire for American athletes to beat the Soviet athletes in total medal count. As more importance was placed on total medal count, women's athletics became more important since their medals and Olympic achievements were needed to ensure Olympic victory over the Soviets. *Sports Illustrated* tended to favor the increased focus on and equality of women's athletics in America, but the magazine still used gendered rhetoric when reporting on women's athletics. The magazine's reporting also showed how the importance of female athletics to the total medal count developed in the 1960s as a response to dominant Soviet female athletes and teams.

Chapter 3 discusses two trends in the Olympics that were largely affected by the Cold War. The first trend was the increased politicization of the Olympic Games. Though the Olympics and politics had been intertwined for a long time, the Cold War rivalries between the USA and the USSR increased the politicization even more. The increased politicization eventually manifested itself in Olympic boycotts in 1980 and 1984. *Sports Illustrated* reported on these boycotts with a saddened tone as the magazine lamented the level to which politics had permeated international competition. The magazine also discussed how the increased politicization could potentially lead to the end of the Olympics if the trend was not reversed. The second trend was the decline of amateurism in the Olympics. *Sports Illustrated* framed the US

and USSR as two of the main causes for the decline of amateurism because each country sent athletes to the Olympics who basically violated the Olympic amateur rules. The desire to produce better athletes meant that many Soviet and American athletes were given advantages not available to the other amateur athletes, which contributed to the decline of amateurism.

Together these chapters reveal another trend in *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of the Cold War. The magazine tended to disfavor the Cold War's political impact on sports only when it decreased excitement and interest in international athletic competition, like with the two boycotts. However, the magazine was able to take advantage of the political nature of Cold War athletics in its reporting when it could possibly increase excitement around international competition.

Chapter 1

Cold War Rhetoric in *Sports Illustrated*

The Cold War inspired an anti-communist crusade in America that permeated through much of society. *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of international competition became an important place for readers to reflect on the Cold War and for writers to deploy Cold War rhetoric. Throughout the Cold War, *Sports Illustrated* favored and upheld US values of capitalism and individualism while negatively reporting on Soviet values of communism and collectivism. The influence of the Cold War on *Sports Illustrated* can be seen through the tone, language, syntax and grammar, which were designed to place the Soviet Union in an unfavorable light compared to the Americans. Coverage of the USSR, Soviet athletic programs, Soviet athletes, and communism all displayed an anti-Soviet and pro-American slant throughout the magazine's sports coverage during the Cold War. Much of *Sports Illustrated's* coverage was consistent, and, in many ways, the reporting was the same in the 1950s as it was in the 1980s. The USSR and Soviet athletic programs were depicted as rigid and oppressive, communism was framed as worse than capitalism, and Soviet athletes were depicted as joyless, monstrous and robotic. However, *Sports Illustrated's* coverage also went through a shift over the course of the Cold War. In the beginning, Soviet athletes were denounced just as much as the system that they came from, but as Cold War tensions began to subside in the 1980s this attitude changed. Instead of Soviet athletes being portrayed as evil robots, they were seen as athletes trapped in an oppressive Soviet system.

International athletic competition was a highly visible stage that allowed competing nations to showcase both the superiority of their country's athletes as well as their ideological systems. During the Cold War, the need to showcase ideological systems became even more important for the USA and USSR as athletes "entere[d] battle to demonstrate national prowess and ideological superiority to audiences at home and abroad."³⁰ Erich Honnecker, a German Democratic Republic (GDR) politician, explained this phenomenon another way when he said: "sport for sport's sake is not a goal; rather it is the means to obtaining other goals."³¹ Both of these quotes display the relationship between sports and politics, a relationship that became less and less distinct throughout the Cold War.

Bob Mathias, a US decathlon champion, said, "There were many more pressures on American athletes because of the Russian [athletes] than in 1948. They were in a sense the real enemy. You just love to beat 'em. You had to beat 'em. It wasn't like beating some friendly country like Australia."³² American athletes felt much more pressure in 1952 than 1948 because of the inclusion of the Russians in the Olympic Games. While this quote did not come from *Sports Illustrated*, it shows the way of thinking that permeated much of *Sports Illustrated's* reporting on Cold War sports as the Russians were considered the enemy to American athletes. *Sports Illustrated* was founded about two years after this quote, which means that *Sports Illustrated* was born into a world where sports were already become a battleground for Cold War rivalries.

In *Sports Illustrated's* first issue, an author wrote that "Russia and her satellites had sent a new breed of athlete out into the free world. He was superbly trained, coldly efficient, intensely

³⁰ Brian R. Sala, et al., "The Cold War on Ice: Constructivism and the Politics of Olympic Figure Skating," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (March, 2007), 17-29.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

suspicious, completely humorless fellow. He worked full time at sports, although he competed as an amateur, and he swiftly built up a legend of invincibility.”³³ Not only does this article insinuate that Russia was not free since it is sent its athletes out of Russia into the free world, but it also summarized the type of stereotypes that *Sports Illustrated* used to describe Soviet athletes. Since this article came from *Sports Illustrated*’s first magazine, it also shows that *Sports Illustrated* had been reporting on the Cold War since day one.

Sports Illustrated helped to fuse politics and sports as it framed international competition as a proxy war throughout its coverage of US-Soviet competition. In 1960, President-elect John F. Kennedy wrote an article for *Sports Illustrated* titled “The Soft American.” The article argued that sports and physical fitness were a prerequisite for national strength and prosperity. In this article, JFK said, “The physical vigor of our citizens is one of America's most precious resources. If we waste and neglect this resource, if we allow it to dwindle and grow soft then we will destroy much of our ability to meet the great and vital challenges which confront our people.”³⁴ JFK said that athletics were important to keep America strong enough to face any challenges that may present themselves, such as war with the Soviet Union. JFK’s sentiment that sports were a prerequisite for national health was not a new idea. In the mid-1800s, a philosophy known as “Muscular Christianity” arose in Great Britain. Muscular Christians argued that sports were a powerful way “to teach and reinforce moral values and virtues, thus serving as a means to build character.”³⁵ Some muscular Christians believed that “physical weakness reflected moral and spiritual weakness; thus, engaging in physical activities and sport

³³ Gerald Holland, “The Golden Age is Now,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, (Aug 16, 1954).

³⁴ John F. Kennedy, “The Soft American,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 13, Issue 26, (Dec 26, 1960).

³⁵ Debora A. Wuest and Charles A. Bucher, *Foundations of Physical Education, Exercise, Science and Sport*, 15th ed., (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 143.

to develop the body reflected one's commitment to develop desirable Christian qualities."³⁶ The notion that sports could develop desirable qualities was echoed in JFK's article, which was written as a response to declining physical fitness in America's youth, a trend that JFK felt could contribute directly to unpreparedness during war. JFK went on to say that:

The stamina and strength which the defense of liberty requires are not the product of a few weeks' basic training or a month's conditioning. These only come from bodies which have been conditioned by a lifetime of participation in sports and interest in physical activity. Our struggles against aggressors throughout our history have been won on the playgrounds and corner lots and fields of America.³⁷

JFK felt that to succeed militarily, America would need to be physically fit, which was important for the proxy war that *Sports Illustrated* developed in sports between the US and the Soviet Union. If physical and athletic superiority translated to success on the battlefield, then the USA had to make sure as a nation that it was more physically fit than the Russians. Whether or not Americans were more physically fit was something that could be measured through international athletic competitions like the Olympics. The fact that JFK decided to publish this article in *Sports Illustrated* shows that the magazine and sports were already a place where the Cold War was being fought. JFK's article served as a warning to Americans about the need for physical fitness and the threat of the Soviets. By publishing the article in *Sports Illustrated*, it shows the connectedness between the Cold War and sports as well as the Cold War and *Sports Illustrated*.

Sports Illustrated framed athletics as a means of determining political, cultural, ideological, and military superiority throughout its coverage during the Cold War. The first step in framing athletic competition between the US and Soviets as a war was to show that it was more important for the US to beat the Soviets than to beat anyone else. A 1964 article from *Sports Illustrated* provides an example of the importance placed on beating the Soviet Union

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

when it stated, “the most important track meet the US takes part in except for the Olympic Games is the annual dual meet with Soviet Russia.”³⁸ Another example comes from an article that previewed the 1968 Olympics, which said, “In the Olympics, as in the world, the dominant forces are the US and the Soviet Union. One or the other will ‘win’ the Olympics.”³⁹ It was important for Americans to compete against the Soviet Union and to beat Soviet athletes. *Sports Illustrated* not only said the most important athletic events are those where the US and Soviet Union compete against each other, but also that if the US does not win, the Soviet Union will. The Olympic Games are a competition between athletes from various countries, but they are not meant to be a competition between countries. However, *Sports Illustrated* frames the Olympics as if it were a competition between the US and the Soviet nations, not between the US and Soviet athletes. A Russian hockey player, regarding playing against NHL teams in the US, said: “We have been told it would be very bad for us not to win.”⁴⁰ This quote gives an ominous tone that the most important thing to Russians was beating the US, while also showing the oppressive nature of Soviet athletics. By commenting on how important it was to Russia to beat the US, *Sports Illustrated* implies that America must do all it can to not allow the Soviets to win.

Another way *Sports Illustrated* framed international competition as a proxy war was by using terms normally associated with military conflict to describe competition between the US and the Soviets. A 1958 article entitled “A Shot at the Russians,” described US athletes as “on a mission.”⁴¹ Another example comes from a 1989 article entitled “The Day We Blasted Moscow,” which discussed an American softball team that visited the USSR. When discussing

³⁸ Dick Bank, “A Slight Blow for Extremism in Sport’s Cold War,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 21, Issue 4, (July 27, 1964).

³⁹ “The Third Force,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 29, Issue 14, (September 30, 1968).

⁴⁰ Mark Mulvoy, “Boris and His Boys Prepare for a Few Friendlies,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 44, Issue 1, (Jan 5, 1976).

⁴¹ Tex Maule, “A Shot at the Russians,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 9, Issue 4, (July 28, 1958).

the softball coach's charm and persuasion, *Sports Illustrated* said, "In no time he had even the most dedicated xenophobes and Red-baiters among us shoveling out down payments for our Soviet invasion."⁴² Another example comes from a quote by Steve Timmons, a US volleyball player, regarding a haircut he got. *Sports Illustrated* reported that Timmons went into a barbershop in the Olympic Village and said, "Give me the Marine cut, I've got a battle tomorrow."⁴³ These three examples, one from the 1950s and two from the 1980s, show the way in which *Sports Illustrated* framed international competition as a "war." These examples also show that this type of framing lasted throughout the Cold War. One need only look at the titles to see this spin since "The Day We Blasted Moscow" and "A Shot at the Russians" sound as much like headlines about actual military conflict as they do about sports. Furthermore, by using words like invasion, mission, shot, battle and blasted *Sports Illustrated* alludes to military conflict in its sports reporting. One last example comes from the article "Russia Keeps Coming on Strong" about a weight-lifting competition between the US and the Soviets. The article says about the Russians:

For a week they had lumbered up and down the streets of historic old Gettysburg in their furry warm-up suits, looking slightly ursine, like the great brown bears of Mother Russia. They had come to the site of one of the biggest military graveyards in North America to fulfill the prophecy of Nikita Khrushchev, who 22 years earlier had promised, "We will bury you." Last week the national weight-lifting team of the U.S.S.R. did just that.⁴⁴

This quote was a portrayal of international sports as a proxy war because not only did it reference one of the most famous battles in American history, but also made it seem as if US athletes should have been buried in a military graveyard after being beaten. Additionally, the

⁴² Ron Fimrite, "The Day We Blasted Moscow," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 70, Issue 26, (June 19, 1989).

⁴³ Bruce Anderson, "West Beats East," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 69, Issue 16, (Oct 10, 1988).

⁴⁴ Bruce Newman, "Russia Keeps Coming On Strong," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 49, Issue 16, (Oct 16, 1978).

article stated that Krushchev said “We will bury you” and that the weight-lifting team did just that, which links Soviet athletes to the Soviet government, thus getting rid of any distinction between athletics and politics.

Another way *Sports Illustrated* framed international competition as a battle between the US and USSR was by making it seem as if competition was not between athletes but instead between nations, which it was not. An article discussing a basketball game between the US and the USSR, which the USSR won, was entitled “First Sputnik, Now This!”⁴⁵ Alluding to the space race between the US and Soviet Union, this article made it seem as if a loss to the Soviets in a basketball game was just as bad as a loss in the space race. Another article about basketball showed this phenomenon of making sports about nation vs. nation instead of athlete vs. athlete when it reported, “The teams were very nearly even at the end of the match, so that supremacy by the United States was substantively challenged.”⁴⁶ This article suggests that losing to the Soviets in basketball challenged US supremacy, not just the US’ basketball supremacy. Similarly, an article about Bobby Fischer, a champion chess player, reported, “Fischer’s opponent, in a sense, is the Soviet Union itself.”⁴⁷ The article went on to say that Fischer’s opponent, Boris Spassky, “will also be out to uphold his nation’s honor.”⁴⁸ Not only did this article frame sports as an East vs. West competition, but it also suggested that to lose would be detrimental to a country’s honor and prestige. In a December 1954 issue, an advertisement designed at raising money for the 1956 Olympics said, “In an effort to ensure victory, many countries...have entered ‘government subsidized’ teams. Whether these nations are defeated

⁴⁵ Jeremiah Tax, “First Sputnik, Now This!,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 10, Issue 6, (Feb 9, 1959).

⁴⁶ William F. Buckley Jr., “Strange Bedfellows,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 37, Issue 13, (Sept 25, 1972).

⁴⁷ Robert Byrne, “The Big Burden Boris Bears,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 36, Issue 11, (March 13, 1972).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

depends in large part upon you—and every American who would rather see the Stars and Stripes hoisted above the victor's stand.”⁴⁹ When *Sports Illustrated* stated that it was up to all Americans to help beat the Soviets it again framed international competition as nation vs. nation. One last example comes from an article about Steve Timmons, which is titled “West Beats East.”⁵⁰ This title frames athletics as a nation vs. nation affair rather than athlete vs. athlete and is a good way to sum up the point that *Sports Illustrated* portrays sports as a competition between the US and the Soviet Union instead of between athletes. These articles come from different decades during the Cold War, which shows that *Sports Illustrated* consistently portrayed international competition as a competition between nations.

Framing Cold War international sporting competition as a proxy war between the USA and the USSR had many ramifications for how communism, Soviet athletes, Soviet athletic program (GTO), and the USSR were portrayed in *Sports Illustrated*. Generally, all of these were portrayed in a negative light as *Sports Illustrated* championed American values.

Sports Illustrated portrayed the Soviet Union as a bleak, backwards, oppressive and disorganized country throughout its reporting during the Cold War. In an article from 1958, *Sports Illustrated* reported on some first impressions of the USSR as American athletes flew over Russia. The author wrote that “the face of Russia seemed empty and ominous,”⁵¹ which does not paint a very attractive picture of the USSR as it describes the dark, sparsely lit country, thus making it seem backwards or undeveloped. The same article stated that “The Americans were hustled through customs in what must have been a world-record time for Russia, where the

⁴⁹ *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 1, Issue 19, (December 20, 1954), 71.

⁵⁰ Anderson, “West Beats East.”

⁵¹ Tex Maule, “An Explosion that Spluttered,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 9, Issue 5, (August 4, 1958).

simplest things are difficult and the difficult impossible.”⁵² The difficulty of completing even the simplest tasks again points to Russia being disorganized or underdeveloped.

The idea that Russia was not as modern as the USA was continued in a 1979 article entitled “Raising the Curtain on Moscow.” By naming the article “Raising the Curtain on Moscow,” it made it seem as if this article was revealing the real Moscow, which, according to this article, was underdeveloped compared to the USA: “You get here and see the differences in food, transport, organization and culture, and you realize the enormous amount of work we have to do.”⁵³ The article then talks about the food and accommodations the American athletes were given: “sliced tongue and green peaches the size of walnuts—did not beguile many American palates, nor did a two-mile walk to Lenin Stadium after being locked in a bus.”⁵⁴ One last quote from this article was: “We’re also making a list of things to bring to make life a little easier, like soap and towels and cushions for the hard stadium seats, and toilet paper.”⁵⁵ All of these quotes displayed an underdeveloped Russia and especially when compared to the more modern USA. The last quote insinuates that Russia was lacking even some of the most basic necessities. Another article directly compares Russia to the USA when it reported that “The players dress for the contests in rooms that are sparsely equipped by North American standards, lacking such conveniences as wall-to-wall carpeting, stereos, television sets, and, of course, hair dryers.”⁵⁶ This quote not only portrays Russia as underdeveloped, but at the same time it favorably

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Kenny Moore, “Raising the Curtain on Moscow,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 51, Issue 6, (Aug 6, 1979).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Mark Mulvoy, “Boris and his Boys Prepare for a few Friendlies,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 44, Issue 4, (Jan 5, 1976).

described the US by talking about the luxuries that American athletes enjoyed in their wealthier and more developed society.

Along with being underdeveloped, Russia was also portrayed as very rigid, oppressive and narrow-minded, which was conveyed in the article “Raising a Curtain on Moscow,” which, when discussing the 1979 Spartakiade, the author wrote:

That event looms as a watershed in Soviet history, a propaganda coup to be sure, but also an occasion for this rigid government and passionately enduring people to lift themselves from their traditional insularity to a new, self-confident civility; if not to the dissenters among them, then to visitors.⁵⁷

Sports Illustrated not only wrote that the Soviet government was rigid but it also wrote that the people were narrow-minded. By describing the people as “enduring,” it gave the connotation that they were barely surviving in the underdeveloped Soviet Union. Another example of Russia being controlling and rigid comes from an article about Vasili Alexeyev, who lived in Shakhty, which as *Sports Illustrated* wrote “has been closed to Western visitors for years, not because it has any secret installations, but because there are no official Intourist facilities to manage the rigidly controlled trips to which tourists are customarily restricted.”⁵⁸ Again, *Sports Illustrated* described Russia as rigid and controlling. Also, by clarifying that it was not because of secret installations that the city was closed, *Sports Illustrated* gave the impression that there were many secret installations around Russia. One last example that portrayed Russia as oppressive and controlling came from an article written in 1972, where the author wrote, “Obviously a nation covets that which another country preeminently has. Not everything, else you’d find Russia

⁵⁷ Moore, “Raising the Curtain on Moscow.”

⁵⁸ William O. Johnson, “The Best At Everything,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 42, Issue 15, (April 14, 1975).

coveting American freedom.”⁵⁹ This article was written by William F. Buckley, Jr., a conservative and anti-communist columnist.⁶⁰ The fact that Buckley published an article in *Sports Illustrated* shows that sports were an important theatre of the Cold War and that *Sports Illustrated* did explicitly report on the Cold War. Buckley’s beliefs also showed that some of the articles in *Sports Illustrated* may have been written specifically for the purpose of framing the Soviets and communism as lesser than Americans and capitalism. The quote suggested two things: the first was that freedom and America were connected in a symbiotic way; the second, was that Russia did not value freedom nor even want it. Since freedom is one of the most treasured of American ideals, when *Sports Illustrated* wrote that Russians did not want it, the magazine draws a very distinct line between Americans and Soviets.

It is important to note that not all of the magazine’s reporting on Russia was negative. In 1960, when Charles Thayer wrote about a hunting trip to Russia, he talked somewhat positively about the Russian people by saying, “Their warm Russian hospitality, the friendliness of this camp far removed from the seats of the Cold War, and the superb sport we had enjoyed for three days made it hard to refuse [another day of hunting].”⁶¹ Describing the Russians as warm and friendly was not something common to *Sports Illustrated*’s reporting of Russia, but even as Thayer did this he disconnected it from the Cold War by saying “this camp far removed from...the Cold War.” Thayer made it seem as if this friendly Russia was not the same Russia America was dealing with in the Cold War. This quote also shows that *Sports Illustrated* did, at times, separate the Russian people from the Soviet Union. Considering that the people were

⁵⁹ William F. Buckley Jr., “Strange Bedfellows,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 37, Issue 13, (Sept 25, 1972).

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Kabaservice, “William F. Buckley Jr.: Right Man, Right Time,” *The New York Times*, (Dec 9, 2011).

⁶¹ Charles W. Thayer, “A Very Soviet Stag Party,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 12, Issue 11, (March 14, 1960).

friendly and the country was oppressive, it follows that the friendly Russians were trapped in an oppressive system. In the 1980s, *Sports Illustrated* began to report about Soviet athletes as people trapped in an oppressive system, which only furthered this notion that first appeared in the 1960s.

The Soviet athletic program was described similarly to reporting about Russia. The country was described as rigid and oppressive, while *Sports Illustrated* portrayed the Soviet athletic program as militarized, strict, hell-bent on winning as the only priority, and extremely standardized. The collective, militarized, and strict Soviet program displayed ideals that were opposed to American ideals of individualism and playing sports for the love of the game. In one article, *Sports Illustrated* reported about how the Soviet Union forced two gymnasts to pretend they were sick and injured so that they could be replaced by two better athletes that had not qualified for the next round of competition because of poor opening rounds. Said the US coach, "I'd like to see a doctor examine those kids. I'm sure they are not injured. I feel sorry for Mostepanova...Now she has a second chance, and they do this. That's cruel. They just want to win."⁶² The US coach insinuated that the extreme desire to win was cruel to the athletes since their well-being was not taken into account. *Sports Illustrated* made it seem as if the supreme focus on winning ran contrary to American ideals, which focused more on the athlete's well-being instead of only winning. Whether or not American coaches were actually kinder and more caring towards their athletes is irrelevant because the point is that in this quote *Sports Illustrated* framed it that way.

Sports Illustrated also portrayed the Soviet athletic program as standardized and harsh. This portrayal did not always have a negative connotation, but it often did. Sabrina Mar, a US

⁶² Pat Putnam, "Tumbling into a Soviet Sea," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 63, Issue 22, (Nov 18, 1985).

gymnast, said of the Soviet athletes, "I thought I was training hard, but then I saw the Soviets, and I know I have to go home and train even harder... They always train hard."⁶³ The majority of coverage in *Sports Illustrated* framed this dedication to training as a negative quality as athletes were made into robots by an oppressive system. Mention of the regimentation and rigidity of Soviet athletic programs started early in *Sports Illustrated*'s coverage and continued throughout the Cold War. An early example comes from a 1956 article, where the author wrote about Soviet skiers, who "under the eyes of Soviet dieticians...crammed down 5,000 calories of food a day (double the intake for an average person)."⁶⁴ Not only were Soviet athletes under constant supervision, but they were almost inhuman in the amount of food that was "crammed" into their bodies. Phrases like "crammed down" and "under the eyes of Soviet dieticians" further the notion that the Soviet athletic program was oppressive and overly controlling.

Another example of the rigidity of the Soviet sports program comes from an article from 1971 titled "They Kicked Off the Cold War." This title is a negative pun, which hints that the Cold War was started by the Russians. The article talks about how the Russians "arrived on schedule but did not wait to hear the reception speech, being hustled instead to a waiting bus by Soviet embassy officials."⁶⁵ Since the Soviets arrived and did not take part in any of the opening ceremonies the article gives the connotation that all the Soviets cared about was winning instead of the camaraderie of the games. Also, by saying that the athletes were "hustled" to a waiting bus, *Sports Illustrated* again conveyed the notion that the Soviet athletes were constantly controlled by their coaches, thus contributing to the oppressive nature of their athletic program.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ezra Brown and George Weller, "The 1956 Winter Olympic," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 4, Issue 5, (Jan 30, 1956).

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Bocca, "They Kicked Off the Cold War," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 34, Issue 19, (May 10, 1971).

The article went on to discuss how when the Soviets were given only four soccer balls with which to practice, they demanded that more be found so that each Soviet player could have his own ball.⁶⁶ While this may have been a reasonable request, *Sports Illustrated* did not frame it that way. When the Soviets asked for more balls, an English official replied, “We don’t have 14 balls, and we don’t know where to find them. There’s been a war on, y’know.”⁶⁷ The author then wrote that “The Russians were implacable, however, and somehow the balls were found.”⁶⁸ *Sports Illustrated* made it seem as if the Soviet Union had to have everything exactly how they wanted it and could not make any exceptions to their normal routine, which again shows the rigidity of their athletic program. Using words like “implacable” conveyed a notion that Soviet athletes were impossible to appease.

One of the ways that *Sports Illustrated* portrayed the Soviet athletic program as opposed to US sports was by championing US values of individualism as compared to the regimented and standardized approach of Soviet athletics. In the article “Meet the Next Heavyweight Champion,” American boxer Floyd Patterson said, “the Russian boxing team was all lined up, standing in their blue sweatshirts. They had an instructor standing in front of them. He would holler an order and throw a jab in the air. Then they would all jab.”⁶⁹ Also, Patterson said that he was scared to face the Russians until he saw the machine-like display by the Soviet boxers, and then he was no longer worried. The fact that he was no longer afraid after seeing how robotic the Russians were reveals two important things about the way *Sports Illustrated* framed Soviet athletics. Not only does it reveal the standardization and regimentation associated with

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Paul O’Neil, “Meet the Next Heavyweight Champion,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 4, Issue 5, (Jan 30, 1956).

Soviet athletics but also because Patterson was not scared after seeing it, the article made it seem as if American individualism triumphs over Soviet collectivism. While this quote was from Patterson and not from a *Sports Illustrated* writer, the magazine still printed this quote and it still developed an anti-Soviet and pro-American sentiment.

Framing Americans as individuals and Soviets as a regimented and collective group was a popular theme throughout *Sports Illustrated*'s Cold War reporting. A 1976 article about a Soviet hockey team reports "On or off the ice, Soviet coaches...hardly think or act with independence. They have all been programmed by the hockey federation and operate their training schedules and game plans with strict attention to...approved guidelines."⁷⁰ The oppressive and controlling Soviet athletic federations program their coaches and athletes so that they are robotic in nature. The article continued to report that "the coach who does not follow [approved guidelines] may not be a coach very long."⁷¹ This quote revealed the oppressive nature of these sports programs as athletes and coaches were forced to comply with Soviet regulations or risk not being allowed to compete. The article went on to discuss how all Russian hockey games looked the same because of the standardized way the Soviets played, which was different from the NHL where there was a more individual style of play.⁷² Again, this article shows *Sports Illustrated*'s attempt to depict the Soviets as overly regimented while celebrating American individualism and creativity. A quote about a Russian hockey team stated, "The Russians all had short army-style haircuts and wore gray, brown and navy-blue clothes."⁷³ Since all of the Soviet athletes looked the same, the article suggested that the Soviet athletic program

⁷⁰ Mark Mulvoy, "Boris and his Boys Prepare for a few Friendlies," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 44, Issue 1, (Jan 5, 1976).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Mark Mulvoy, "Feasting on the Unfortunates," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, (Jan 14, 1974).

was overly standardized. By characterizing the haircuts as army-style, *Sports Illustrated* alludes to regimentation normally associated with military entities. Many of the Soviet athletes were in the Soviet military, but *Sports Illustrated* makes no mention of that fact in this article. The militaristic depiction of Soviet athletics contributed to the idea of Soviet athletics being non-individualistic.

From an American perspective, *Sports Illustrated* highlighted the difference between American individuality and Soviet collectivism when it discussed a US-Soviet track and field competition. About the Soviets, *Sports Illustrated* reported:

They gathered in disciplined groups around American performers. Soviet coaches with cameras took movies of every American gesture, but they are due for some surprises if they expect their own athletes to use the same warm-up methods, since some Americans—such as Charley Dumas, the world record holder in the high jump—invented exercise to suit the occasion.⁷⁴

This quote showed the difference between Americans and Soviets, but it also made it seem as if the Soviets were trying to be more like Americans. However, as hard as the Soviets tried they could not replicate the individualism that was present in US athletics.

The Soviet athletic program was depicted as oppressive, rigid and militarized throughout *Sports Illustrated*'s coverage during the Cold War. The quotes that displayed these attitudes came from various decades during the Cold War, which again shows that the anti-Soviet slant was prevalent throughout the Cold War.

The regimented and standardized style of the Soviet athletic program gave way to stereotypes about Soviet athletes, who were depicted as joyless, machine-like, and monstrous throughout *Sports Illustrated*'s reporting during the Cold War. One way that *Sports Illustrated* depicted the Soviets negatively was by focusing on their isolation in Olympic villages. Instead

⁷⁴ Tex Maule, "An Explosion that Spluttered," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 9, Issue 5, (Aug 4, 1958).

of partaking in the joyful spirit of international competition, *Sports Illustrated* depicted the Soviets as focused only on winning as they isolated themselves from the rest of the world. The tactic of isolating a team had been adopted by other Olympic teams (including the US), but *Sports Illustrated* reported negatively on this decision by the Russians. In an article from 1958, *Sports Illustrated* reported that when the Stockholm organizing committee for the European Athletic Championships organized comfortable living arrangements for athletes all partook in these “Except for the Soviets—who asked to be alone.”⁷⁵ The theme of isolation was continued throughout *Sports Illustrated*’s early reporting of Soviet athletes and another example comes from an article about a US-Soviet basketball game, which stated, “The exception to all this amity and accord was the behavior of the Russians and Bulgarians, who appeared for meals and showed up promptly for their games but stayed in their rooms all the rest of the time.”⁷⁶ The theme of isolation implied that the Russians did not value friendship or camaraderie, which were meant to be part of the focus of international competition.

The theme of the Soviets being only focused on winning was shown in a 1959 article about a US-Soviet basketball game, when it was reported that “[isolation] was the rule until the day after the Russians beat the US...They had done what they came to do, and now they were permitted to relax.”⁷⁷ The Soviets were on a mission and could not relax or have fun until that mission was accomplished, which was opposed to American athletes who enjoy even the opportunity to compete. Soviet athletes were also described as joyless in many accounts of sporting events. In an article about weightlifting competition, *Sports Illustrated* stated that

⁷⁵ Robert Ball, “The Big ‘Little Olympics’,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, (Sept 8, 1958).

⁷⁶ Jeremiah Tax, “First Sputnik, Now This!,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 10, Issue 6, (Feb 9, 1959).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

previous victories “had produced no such display of happiness and release.”⁷⁸ Another example of this joylessness comes from a 1956 article about the Olympics, which said, “[Most] consider the Olympic Games as something to be enjoyed. And that goes for a good many of the competitors. Not, it is almost superfluous to say, for the Russians. It is their wont on these occasions to live some distance from the heart of the matter...isolated...in a lonely hotel.”⁷⁹ Here, *Sports Illustrated* depicted the Russians as bleak and unfriendly, and by saying that it was “almost superfluous to say” *Sports Illustrated* made it seem as if the entire Soviet society was bleak and unfriendly, not just the athletes. Even when the Soviets did show happiness it was not reported as the same jovial type as American happiness, but instead as “a fierce joy, from which was lacking the gaiety which marks a Western reaction to triumph.”⁸⁰ Russian joy was described as fierce and different from the more lighthearted and fun American joy. This “fierce joy” also gave the connotation that the Soviet athletes were somewhat monstrous since they do not feel joy the same way people in the West do.

The theme of isolation and joylessness was also evident in interviews of Soviet athletes, where *Sports Illustrated* presented a view that Soviet society was secretive as opposed to a more open and trusting American society. “[The Soviets] began by refusing to talk to reporters at the airport or sign the autograph books of English schoolboys.”⁸¹ This quote not only portrayed the Soviets as private, but also as unfriendly since they would not sign autographs for English schoolboys. Even when interviews could be obtained, *Sports Illustrated* stressed the difficulty of getting such reports. In a photograph of some Russian athletes from a February 13, 1956 issue of

⁷⁸ Terry Todd, “The King is Ailing, Long Live the Sultan,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 51, Issue 22, (Nov 26, 1979).

⁷⁹ Andre Laguerre, “Russia Takes Over,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 4, Issue 6, (Feb 6, 1956).

⁸⁰ Andre Laguerre, “Lessons of Cortina,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 4, Issue 7, (Feb 13, 1956).

⁸¹ Bocca, “They Kicked Off the Cold War.”

Sports Illustrated, the caption read, “An SI reporter penetrates Soviet social curtain.”⁸²

Penetrating the “Soviet social curtain” made it seem as if Soviets did not want to be interviewed and that it was very difficult to obtain interviews. One last example comes from an article about Vasily Alexeyev, a Russian weightlifter. The article stated that “Alexeyev spent most of the week hibernating in his hotel room, wearily greeting a steady procession of American journalists.”⁸³ Not only did this quote reflect the difficulty of getting interviews and the apprehension of Soviet athletes to give them, it also framed the athlete as somewhat monstrous by saying that he was “hibernating” thus alluding to a bear, which was also the symbolic animal of Russia.

One of the most prevalent stereotypes of Soviet athletes in *Sports Illustrated* was one that depicted Soviet athletes as robotic. The idea that Soviet athletes were joyless and that their faces “rarely betrayed a flicker of elation”⁸⁴ contributed to the notion that they were robotic, as did the high regimentation of their sports program. In an article about Janis Lysis, a Soviet javelin thrower, the author wrote that Lysis had “a style that is forceful and efficient, characterized by piston-like delivery and little in the way of wasted motion.”⁸⁵ This quote could just as easily be describing a machine or robot as it could be an athlete. Another example comes from former Soviet defector and chess champion Viktor Korchnoi, who, when facing a Soviet opponent, said, “I will beat the little boy and prove once and for all the Soviet system produces only robots.”⁸⁶

⁸² Andre Laguerre, “The Russians Unbend,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 4, Issue 7, (Feb 13, 1956).

⁸³ Bruce Newman, “Russia Keeps Coming on Strong,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 49, Issue 16, (Oct 16, 1978).

⁸⁴ Laguerre, “Lessons of Cortina.”

⁸⁵ Jerry Kirshenbaum, “They’re All out to Launch,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 31, Issue 3, (July 21, 1969).

⁸⁶ J.D. Reed, “Back to Drawing Old Board,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 49, Issue 5, (July 31, 1978).

Korchnoi directly called the Soviet athletes robots, something that was done many times in *Sports Illustrated's* Cold War coverage.

Coverage of Soviet athletes during the 1950s to 1970s in *Sports Illustrated* highlighted many negative stereotypes. However, by the 1980s, the tone softened as Soviet athletes tried to come to America to play professional sports. In a 1989 article about Soviet players coming to America to play professional hockey, the author positively described the athletes as “dynamic,” “powerful and speedy,” and one as “a slick playmaker.”⁸⁷ However, while *Sports Illustrated* wrote positively about the athletes, they continued to portray the USSR as oppressive and authoritative. The article stated that “eight Soviet players were given permission” to play in the NHL and that this was only made possible because of one player “sneak[ing] out the back door.”⁸⁸ Even as Soviet athletes came to America, *Sports Illustrated* made sure to point out that they did not do so with the blessing of their government and sometimes had to sneak out of the country. This sentiment was also evident in a 1988 article about a Soviet basketball player, who had previously been on the Red Army team. Not only does it say that the army tried to stall his departure but also quotes a Soviet journalist, who said, “I’m not sure the generals think that a Soviet army officer playing in America is such a good idea.”⁸⁹ *Sports Illustrated* promoted the idea that the Soviet government was keeping their athletes in the USSR even when they wanted to leave, which again highlighted the controlling nature of the USSR.

Describing Max Blank, a Soviet basketball player who came to America for high school, *Sports Illustrated* discussed how Max quickly adopted the American way of life over the inferior Soviet life. *Sports Illustrated* reported that “Max has embraced the American way—democracy,

⁸⁷ Jay Greenberg, “The Honeymooners,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 71, Issue 16, (Oct 9, 1989).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Jack McCallum, “So Near, So Far,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 69, Issue 17, (Oct 17, 1988).

the flag, Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons, slam dunks—and he's sure that his own example is proof that anyone willing to work hard can make it here.”⁹⁰ The article continued to say that “[Max] loves all the opportunities that are here for him” and that “He’s a symbol of what’s being oppressed in Russia, of the thousands of other lives and all the potential that’s being wasted behind the Iron Curtain.”⁹¹ These quotes painted a picture of the USSR as an oppressive place that people were trying to escape from to come to America. However, about Russia, Max said, “I was very happy in Russia, I had a lot of friends there, and my stomach was never hungry. I never had it hard.”⁹² This quote is important for two reasons. First, the quote shows that not there was a slant in much of *Sports Illustrated*’s about the Soviets because Max said he was happy and had opportunities in Russia. Also, the quote shows that *Sports Illustrated* did not only print articles and quotes that were anti-Soviet. Much of *Sports Illustrated*’s coverage regarding Soviet athletics was negative, but they allowed a positive depiction from Max to be printed too.

Soviet athletes came to America to play sports for many reasons, but *Sports Illustrated* made it seem as if one reason was the superiority of capitalism over communism. One of the ways the magazine portrayed capitalism as superior to communism was by showing that, when given the opportunity, Soviet athletes favored capitalism over communism. In an article from the August 30, 1954 issue, the author discussed how even though the Soviet coach preached that “sport is discipline, will power and toil”⁹³ Soviet athletes headed right for department stores instead of practice when they got to the European games. The article reported that the women bought lipstick, mascara and nail polish while men focused on fancy shoes. The fact that the

⁹⁰ Bruce Newman, “From Russia With Love,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 60, Issue 18, (April 30, 1984).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 1, Issue 3, (Aug 30, 1954), 16-17.

Soviets headed straight for department stores suggested that even communists could not resist acting like capitalists when left unsupervised.

Another example comes from an article about a Russian weightlifter who said that his kids “frequently watch cartoons, including...Mickey Mouse.”⁹⁴ A similar quote, discussing Russian hockey players, said that “On their next several trips to North America they master the tricky terms ‘room service’ and ‘three Cokes cold.’”⁹⁵ Mickey Mouse and Coke are two major symbols of American commercialism and capitalism, so the fact that Soviets wanted these things meant that even they had capitalist sympathies. One more example comes from two Soviet tennis players, Natalia Zvereva and Andrei Chesnokov, who challenged their country’s system of withholding prize money. Zvereva pocketed \$10,000 from one tournament and smaller amounts from others to supplement the \$800 per week she was paid by the Soviet government. With that money she said wanted to buy a Mercedes-Benz. Chesnokov said that he was only given about \$10,000 of the \$500,000 that he had won since he became a pro, with one of the most egregious examples being when he won \$59,500 but only received \$496.⁹⁶ This quote shows two things, the first being, again, the controlling nature of the Soviet Union where people did not even get to keep their winnings. Second, these two tennis players were important because *Sports Illustrated*’s coverage said that they wanted more money to buy products, which is a capitalist attitude. When *Sports Illustrated* reported things like this it asserted capitalism’s superiority over communism.

⁹⁴ William O. Johnson, “The Best At Everything,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 42, Issue 15, (April 14, 1975).

⁹⁵ Mark Mulvoy, “Feasting on the Unfortunates,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, (Jan 14, 1974).

⁹⁶ Dave Scheiber, “In Search of a Net Gain,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 60, Issue 19, (May 1, 1989).

Examining *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of athletics throughout the Cold War reveals a staunchly anti-Soviet sentiment. Much of the reporting was consistently anti-Soviet from the first years of *Sports Illustrated's* existence to the end of the Cold War. The USSR was depicted as oppressive and backwards, the Soviet athletic program was depicted as militarized, too focused on winning, and rigid, and communism was portrayed as inferior to capitalism. The rhetoric related to the USSR, Soviet athletic programs, and communism was consistent throughout *Sports Illustrated's* coverage as the magazine favored American ideals of freedom, camaraderie, and capitalism. However, the depictions of Soviet athletes changed over the course of the Cold War. Initially, Soviet athletes were portrayed as joyless, monstrous and robotic, but as Soviet athletes began leaving Russia to play professionally in the US, *Sports Illustrated* began to frame Soviet athletes as trapped in an oppressive system.

Chapter 2

***Sports Illustrated*, Gendered Rhetoric, and the Development of Women's Athletics in America During the Cold War**

The history of women's sports in America was a tumultuous journey from very little female participation in athletics to a more equal footing with men's athletics, though women's sports were still trivialized and marginalized in many ways. The marginalization of women's athletics in the US was contrasted with women's sports in the USSR, where women often had more opportunities and encouragement to participate in athletics. Through legislation like Title IX, influential female athletes, and the women's liberation movement of the 1960s, women became prevalent in and significant to US athletics. Women's athletics in America also developed in response to Cold War rivalries with the USSR because women's medals in the Olympics became more important as the two countries participated in a medal race. One way that women's sports were marginalized was through the media, which used gendered rhetoric and imagery to continue to place women's athletics on a lower footing than men's. *Sports Illustrated* provides an example of how this subjugation took place because of gendered rhetoric, lack of coverage of women's sports compared to men's, and through the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue. However, *Sports Illustrated*, while using gendered rhetoric throughout is reporting on women's athletics, did go through an important shift in the early 1970s regarding women's athletics. In the 1960s, *Sports Illustrated* reported about the importance of US women's sports in international competition, where the Soviet women were winning most of the medals. The desire to beat the Soviets in total medal count made women's athletics much more important by the

1970s and *Sports Illustrated*'s reporting on women's athletics began to take on a much different tone. Still, even as women's athletics were framed as more equal to men's, *Sports Illustrated* continued to use gendered rhetoric that placed men's athletics above women's.

In 1900, women were first allowed to compete in the Olympic Games but there were few events available to women. Throughout the next few decades, more and more events were added for women in international competition, but women's athletics were still not close to being equal with men's.⁹⁷ Women also began to participate in athletics at a higher rate outside of international competition, but women's athletics still remained somewhat of a social taboo until the end of World War II. Various movements and ideas up until World War II contributed to the idea that women should not participate in sports, such as: the anti-competitive movement, the advent of "play days," and the idea that sports were harmful to a woman's reproductive cycle.⁹⁸ Participating in college athletics was also rarely available to women, and of 50 colleges surveyed in 1923, only 22% allowed intercollegiate completion while 93% were opposed to varsity competition at women's levels.⁹⁹

Women's athletics began to gain more equality during the 1960s and 1970s because of the women's liberation movement, Title IX, and the success of a few standout female athletes.¹⁰⁰ In terms of the women's liberation movement, women, primarily of the educated class, wanted freedom to achieve their own identity separate from that of their children or husbands, and

⁹⁷ Barbara Noonkester, "The American Sportswoman from 1900-1920," *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports*, from Reet Howell., ed., (New York: Leisure Press, 1982), 211.

⁹⁸ John Lucas and Ron Smith, "Women's Sport: A Trial of Equity," from *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports*, Reet Howell., ed., (New York: Leisure Press, 1982), 244-254.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 254.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 257.

eventually these ideas translated to the world of sports.¹⁰¹ At the same time, Title IX reduced the inequality of college athletics as it allowed for more funding to women's athletic programs and female athletes like Billie Jean King were enjoying large amounts of success.

When *Sports Illustrated* first started there was very little coverage of female athletics. From 1954 to 1967, *Sports Illustrated* included only 200 stories and articles about female athletics, while having them featured on only 44 covers out of approximately 700.¹⁰² Women were featured on about 6% of covers from 1954 to 1967, which shows the focus was not on female athletics.

In the 1950s, coverage of women's sports in *Sports Illustrated* was infrequent and often unrelated to athletics. One example comes from the November 29th and December 20th issues from 1954, where "girl watching" was considered a sport. "I see by your November 29th issue that my hobby (girl watching) has now been officially recognized as a sport. To help you and your readers get more pleasure out of this wonderful pastime, I am enclosing a copy of my *Girl Watcher's Guide*, the only authoritative handbook on the subject ever published."¹⁰³ While this quote came from a reader and not someone writing for *Sports Illustrated*, the magazine still published this man's letter, information about girl watching, and a cartoon about girl watching. The fact that a sporting magazine included a piece about girl watching and framed it as a sport is significant. When *Sports Illustrated* printed articles that portrayed girl watching as a sport or as a pastime it marginalized women by objectifying them. Considering the low coverage of female athletics, when *Sports Illustrated* printed articles like this, it gave a connotation that women's

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 257-258.

¹⁰² Deborah Heistand, "Women in Sports in the United States, 1945-1978," from *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports*, Reet Howell, ed., (New York: Leisure Press, 1982), 322.

¹⁰³ "19th Hole: The Readers Take Over," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 1 Issue 19, (Dec 20, 1954).

athletics were not equal to men's. Girl watching was an extreme example of how *Sports Illustrated* marginalized women's athletics in the 1950s, but the magazine continued to use gendered rhetoric throughout much of its coverage of women's athletics during the Cold War.

There were many ways language contributed to the cultural devaluation of female athletics in *Sports Illustrated*, including: masculine generics, gender marking, naming practices, metaphorical language of sport, and descriptive linguistics. Masculine generics are when one uses a presumption of maleness, for example in women's basketball calling a women defender a defenseman or saying that a good team has a workman's attitude. Naming conventions also contribute heavily to the marginalization of women's athletics as words like girl, sweetie, princess, doll, ladies, and informal use of first names widen the inequality gap.¹⁰⁴

Naming conventions were one way *Sports Illustrated* trivialized women's athletics. One example comes from a *Sports Illustrated* article about female gymnastics where the author wrote, "The girls drill on a balcony along with the judo, wrestling, track and men's gymnastics teams."¹⁰⁵ Some titles of articles, like "Sweet Life of an Olympic Doll," an article about Peggy Fleming, also served as an example of naming conventions.¹⁰⁶ Both of these were examples of using naming conventions to marginalize women's sports because they used terms like girl and doll to reduce the power of female athletes by characterizing them as something other than athletes.

Commenting on the aesthetics of women's sport, by focusing on physical appearance and sexuality, is another way *Sports Illustrated* reinforced stereotypes about women's athletics. One

¹⁰⁴ Jeffrey O. Segrave, et al., "Language, Gender, and Sport: A Review of the Research Literature," from *Sport, Rhetoric and Gender: Historical Perspectives and Media Representations*, Linda K. Fuller, ed., (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2006), 31-33.

¹⁰⁵ "Don't Tell the Girls How Pretty They Are," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 34 Issue 13, (March 29, 1971).

¹⁰⁶ "Sweet Life of an Olympic Doll," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 29 Issue 20, (Nov 11, 1968).

example of this came from a *Sports Illustrated* article about American gymnasts: “America’s girl gymnasts are sick and tired of being told they’re beautiful. Really. Until recently the line at international matches went, ‘Darling, you had the loveliest team—even if your scores were terrible.’”¹⁰⁷ This quote did not necessarily use the aesthetics of women’s sport to marginalize it, but the quote did show that female athletes were often characterized and described by their physical appearance and sexuality. In a 1969 article about the US women’s track and field team, *Sports Illustrated* introduced some of the athletes trying to earn a spot on the team, but focused on the physical beauty of the athletes rather than their athletic prowess. Descriptions like “Barbara Britch...is fair and lovely,” “Alison Owen...slim and blonde,” and “Mary Pendleton...dark and queenly even in a sweat suit”¹⁰⁸ focus on the physical appearance of female athletes rather than their athletic skill. An article about Peggy Fleming described her as “pretty, fragile and charming.”¹⁰⁹ An article about Lisa Lane, a chess champion, also portrayed this bias when it said that “she seems a very serious young woman, but beautifully serious, or seriously beautiful.”¹¹⁰ All of these quotes were examples of *Sports Illustrated* focusing on the physical appearance of female athletes instead of their athletic prowess. These quotes are all from the 1960s and so they show common reporting of women’s athletics in *Sports Illustrated* prior to the 1970s. During the 1970s, *Sports Illustrated* began to focus more on the actual sport of women’s athletics rather than the aesthetics. However, there were still many times when *Sports Illustrated* used gendered rhetoric, such as in an article about swimming from 1972, which described Shirley Babashoff, a female swimmer, as “a leggy steelworker’s daughter whose surname and

¹⁰⁷ “Don’t Tell the Girls How Pretty They Are.”

¹⁰⁸ William Johnson, “Some New Babes in the Woods,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 31 Issue 25, (Dec 15, 1969).

¹⁰⁹ “Sweet Life of an Olympic Doll.”

¹¹⁰ Robert Cantwell, “Queen of Knights and Pawns,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 15 Issue 6, (Aug 7, 1961).

blonde, apple-pied good looks seemed very much in place in Portage Park.”¹¹¹ The article also discussed her swimming prowess, but quotes about her good looks show that *Sports Illustrated* was still using gendered rhetoric. A quote from a 1984 article shows the development of *Sports Illustrated*’s coverage of female athletics when it described Flo Hyman, a volleyball player, as “a phenomenal athlete who seemingly strikes the ball with enough ferocity to rearrange the grain in a wood floor.”¹¹² This quote made no mention of Hyman’s aesthetic appeal and only focused on her athletic prowess, which shows the development of *Sports Illustrated*’s reporting.

Another way to marginalize women was by using the adolescent ideal where articles focused on and portrayed juvenile and adolescent qualities of female athletes. One example was from an article about Annie Henning, a track and field star, who was described as “a pixielike high school junior who is sunny and relaxed, a curly-haired blonde with a sweet smile, an apostle of the luck that resides in a Snoopy doll and of the restorative powers of Peter Pan peanut butter.”¹¹³ Instead of focusing on Henning’s athleticism, it focused on her appearance and made her seem extremely young. While she was only a high school junior, she seemed even younger because of the descriptions like “pixielike” and because of the references to Snoopy and Peter Pan. Another example of the adolescent ideal comes from an article about female gymnastics, which stated that “The girls accept tears as part of the price for taking part in such an excruciatingly subjective sport.”¹¹⁴ This quote made it seem as if crying, something associated

¹¹¹ Jerry Kirshenbaum, “Mark of Excellence,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 37, Issue 7, (Aug 14, 1972).

¹¹² Joan Ackermann-Blount, “The Waiting is Over,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 61, Issue 5, (July 23, 1984).

¹¹³ William Johnson, “Ice Cold Games and a Solid Gold Girl,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 36 Issue 5, (Jan 31, 1972).

¹¹⁴ “Don’t Tell the Girls How Pretty They Are.”

with youth, was an inherent part of female gymnastics, a sentiment not echoed in coverage of men's gymnastics.

The adolescent ideal was also portrayed through the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue. The adolescent ideal denotes a lack of power in the models through poses, body type, lack of body hair and activities associated with youth. *Sports Illustrated* promoted the adolescent ideal throughout the Swimsuit Issue as evidenced by four covers from 1966, 1967, 1976, and 1982. Poses contributed to a lack of power in the models because they often posed in non-aggressive poses like lying down (See Picture 1), crawling, peering out from behind something, with their heads down or to the side and their eyes averted (See Picture 2). In picture 1, the cover of the 1966 issue, the model was lying down and averting her eyes, which were both non-aggressive poses. She also had her eyes closed, which again displayed a lack of power.¹¹⁵ In picture 2, the cover of the 1967 issue, the models eyes are averted and closed.¹¹⁶ Poses that displayed immature movement patterns, silliness and simple gymnastics moves encouraged viewers to perceive the model as childlike (See Picture 3). In picture 3, the cover of the 1976 issue, two models are playing in the water and laughing.¹¹⁷ By showing these models participating in activities associated with youth, like playing in the ocean, *Sports Illustrated* displayed a lack of power in their models and promoted the adolescent ideal.

Another way to denote a lack of power and the adolescent ideal is through thinness and lack of muscle tone (See Picture 4). In picture 4, the cover of the 1982 issue, the model is not only skinny, but she is standing in such a way that she appears even skinnier as her body is

¹¹⁵ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 24 Issue 3, (Jan 17, 1966).

¹¹⁶ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 26 Issue 3, (Jan 16, 1967).

¹¹⁷ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 44 Issue 3, (Jan 19, 1976).

turned to the side, which conveys a lack of power.¹¹⁸ Lack of body hair also conveyed the adolescent ideal, which was something that all of these pictures had in common. Written text also enforced these adolescent stereotypes, for example, in a “Letter from the Publisher” in the 1983 Swimsuit Issue, where many of the models were talked about. Much of the discussion around these models centered around what sports they played when they were kids: “Kelly Emberg was a competitive gymnast through 9th grade.”¹¹⁹ While readers may be interested that Kelly Emberg played gymnastics through 9th grade, it did not offer much value. Considering she stopped competing in athletics in 9th grade, she could not really be considered an athlete and so it seems almost irrelevant to include this information. Also, by focusing on the activities she participated in as a child, *Sports Illustrated* again portrayed the adolescent ideal.

The Swimsuit Issue must be seen in the context of contemporary gender relations, and so the issue reinforced a gendered hierarchy by reinforcing stereotypes of women as sexual objects lacking power. *Sports Illustrated* used women as an aesthetic and sexual spectacle and thus defined the readership as heterosexual male.¹²⁰ Another way it defined its readership was through the Swimsuit Issue being the only issue dedicated to women. One reader of *Sports Illustrated* said, “They’re featuring top athletes in SI, but they’re all men. Women are relegated to doing the nudey pages.”¹²¹ It was not necessarily the concept of sexuality which was offensive: “The portrayal of sexuality per se is not offensive...what is offensive is that only this aspect of women is shown, while their legitimate role in sport is ignored. Meanwhile, men’s role

¹¹⁸ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 56 Issue 5, (Feb 5, 1982).

¹¹⁹ Philip G. Howlett, “Letter from the Publisher,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 58, Issue 6, (Feb 14, 1983).

¹²⁰ Laurel R. Davis, *The Swimsuit Issue and Sport: Hegemonic Masculinity in Sports Illustrated*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 60.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

in sport is well reported while their sensuality, interestingly enough, is never mentioned.”¹²² The claim that men’s sexuality was never mentioned may be an oversimplification, but it is evident that women’s sensuality was definitely mentioned at a much higher rate. To some feminists, the Swimsuit Issue was offensive not because of its content, but because of the differences between the Swimsuit Issue and the regular weekly issues. Since the Swimsuit Issue was the only issue dedicated to women it made it seem as if the other issues were devoted to men.

Creating different expectations for men and women was another way that *Sports Illustrated* trivialized women’s sports. An article discussing a one on one basketball game between Mary Jo Pepper, a volleyball player, and a male athlete provided a good example for how *Sports Illustrated* created different expectations for men and women:

He had controlled himself at first. He played delicately enough, giving her plenty of room to maneuver, careful wherever he touched and reached, taking long, easy jump shots that required no close contact. To his surprise, she played the kind of rough, physical game that he’d always delighted in. Unconsciously, she fouled blatantly, shoving him with both hands whenever he drove toward the basket.¹²³

This quote conveyed the idea that the man did not expect Pepper to be a good basketball nor to be able to compete with him physically. Since it was assumed that Pepper would not be able to compete with the man athletically, the man was surprised when she played a physical game that was associated with men’s basketball. The author wrote, “She was an untutored basketball player. She did not dribble or shoot very well...But she moved beautifully. She ran gracefully, her toes pointed towards the ground like someone leaping from rock to rock across a stream.”¹²⁴

This quote conveyed different expectations for male and female athletics. The woman may not have been good at basketball, but that was ok because she looked good while she played. This

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Pat Jordan, “Designing Women,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 43 Issue 5, (Aug 4, 1975).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

article was written in 1975, which shows that *Sports Illustrated* continued to use gendered rhetoric into the 1970s. *Sports Illustrated*'s coverage of female athletics became less gendered during the 1970s, but this article shows that the trend was not an immediate process nor did the magazine rid itself of gendered rhetoric completely.

The last way to use gendered rhetoric to marginalize women's sports was through narrative ambivalence that created conflicting and contradictory messages. One way narrative ambivalence was used was by describing women in one sense as powerful but vulnerable in another. An example of these contradictory descriptions was a quote about some female cross-country skiers:

They have cherry cheeks that need no rouge, complexions of outdoor children, the clear eyes of guileless girls; there is in all of them a delicacy of Little Womanhood. They seem suited to a fragile world of needlepoint and powder puffs. But do not be deceived...How they look and what they do are far different things.¹²⁵

This quote created a contradiction by describing the athletes in adolescent terms and then saying that that was not how they actually were. Two more examples were of Peggy Fleming and Annie Henning. About Peggy, *Sports Illustrated* said, "She was always pretty, fragile and charming: a Dresden figurine performing tough school figures as though they were the easiest thing in the world."¹²⁶ About Annie Henning, *Sports Illustrated* said, "Despite her elfin features, Annie Henning, is an impressively strong young lady, blessed with a speed skater's classic powerful things."¹²⁷ Both of these quotes displayed the type of contradictory messages often associated with women's athletic coverage. Both were delicate or elfin on the one hand, but

¹²⁵ Johnson, "Some New Babes in the Woods."

¹²⁶ "Sweet Life of an Olympic Doll."

¹²⁷ Johnson, "Ice Cold Games and a Solid Gold Girl."

skilled and powerful on the other. In this way, femininity and athleticism are somewhat differentiated thus making it harder to blend the two.

Sports Illustrated's coverage of women's athletics marginalized even some of the most successful and prominent female athletes like Billie Jean King. "Mrs. King is an aggressive, hard-hitting net rusher who flails away at everything within reach."¹²⁸ Using verbs like "flails away" denotes a lack of control and skill, something obviously not attributable to Billie Jean King. About a match between Billie Jean King and Nancy Richey, *Sports Illustrated* said, "Limited in strength, the girls seldom play the stereotyped grass-court game played almost without exception by the men."¹²⁹ Even in complimenting the athletic prowess of these female athletes, *Sports Illustrated* marginalized the women by saying, "Their only condescension to femininity were the tiny blue pompons Billie Jean wore on the backs of her sneakers."¹³⁰ When they were complimented, it had to be pointed out that they had to rid themselves of their femininity to be able to perform at such a high athletic level. While much of *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of female athletics used gendered rhetoric, there were times when reporting of women's athletics was comparable to men's. In an article from 1966 about Billie Jean King, the author wrote, "Billie Jean buzzes the net like a torpedo boat approaching for the kill and overpowers most opponents, but she will have to work more thoughtfully against Nancy, who stands at the baseline like an offshore battleship."¹³¹ This quote was very similar to the type of reporting given to men's sports, using euphemisms that denote violence and aggressiveness.

¹²⁸ Kim Chapin, "Goodbye Billie Jean, with Love from Nancy," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 28 Issue 14, (April 8, 1968).

¹²⁹ Bud Collins, "A Duel on Grass at 26 Paces," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 25 Issue 10, (Sept 5, 1966).

¹³⁰ Chapin, "Goodbye Billie Jean, with Love from Nancy."

¹³¹ Bud Collins, "A Duel on the Grass at 26 Paces," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 25, Issue 10, (Sept 5, 1966).

This article was written in 1966 and shows that, even before the 1970s, *Sports Illustrated* was beginning a trend towards less gendered reporting of women's athletics.

To compare the rhetoric of men and women's sports more, men's sports language tended to focus on three metaphorical conventions: violence, sex and the machine. Teams "kill," "murder," and "destroy" each other; Male athletes "penetrate," "dive," and "score;" and athletes "burn up the track" and "rev their engines." All of these are examples of how rhetoric masculinized sport.¹³² *Sports Illustrated* used masculine rhetoric often in its coverage of male sports. For example, in an article about the NCAA tournament, the author wrote, "the proliferation of guards who can penetrate...is the biggest change in college basketball."¹³³ Another example comes from an article about college football, where the author stated, "For if a team thinks too much about stopping the pass, White will destroy it. In fact, if the opposition concentrates exclusively on the run, White might wreak havoc, anyway."¹³⁴ These examples both show that *Sports Illustrated* used these common metaphorical conventions.

While *Sports Illustrated* used gendered rhetoric throughout its Cold War reporting, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of female athletics grew in scope and started to become a little less gendered. Two important developments that contributed to the decrease in gendered language were the passing of Title IX and the increased importance of total medal count in the Olympic Games, which meant that women's medals, and thus women's athletics, began to matter much more in international competition.

¹³² Segrave, et al., "Language, Gender, and Sport," 36.

¹³³ Alexander Wolff, "Avant Guard," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 86, Issue 11, (March 17, 1997).

¹³⁴ Douglas S. Looney, "It's Still a Toss-Up at the Top," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 51, Issue 26, (Dec 24, 1979).

In 1972, Title IX was passed.¹³⁵ Title IX applied to nearly every school and college in America that received federal funding, and came at a time when sports were one of the most blatant areas of sexism. At the time of Title IX's passing, women's sports were often financed with less than 1% of the budget of men's programs, but Title IX required equality of opportunity, facilities, practice time, coaching and travel.¹³⁶ It also meant that athletic scholarships were equally available to both men and women.¹³⁷ Title IX had immediate implications on women's sports in the US. In 1970-71, the number of interscholastic female athletes in the US was 268,591, which was 7% of the interscholastic athletic population. By 1979, women constituted 26% of total college athletes and 18% of the collegiate budget was spent on women, undoubtedly effects of Title IX.¹³⁸

Sports Illustrated recognized and constantly reminded the reader of the importance of Title IX to the growth of women's athletics and, in general, *Sports Illustrated's* coverage seems to be pro-Title IX. *Sports Illustrated* also reported on some of the dissenting opinions of detractors of the amendment. Many were fearful that Title IX would take money away from revenue producing sports like football and men's basketball. However, *Sports Illustrated* did not agree with this sentiment and portrayed those who did agree with it as somewhat selfish. Discussing the risk of less money going to revenue producing sports, a *Sports Illustrated* writer wrote, "In other words, Darrell Royal should not have to share his profits with Texas coeds who last year had to make do with \$9,000."¹³⁹ This quote seems to be sarcastic as it points to the lack of equality in college athletics where women's athletics are often underfunded compared to

¹³⁵ Lucas, "Women's Sport: A Trial of Equality," 259.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 260.

¹³⁸ John Underwood, "An Odd Way to Even Things Up," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 50, Issue 5, (Feb 5, 1979).

¹³⁹ Ibid.

men's. In one *Sports Illustrated* article, the author wrote that the argument that Title IX would reduce budgets of revenue producing sports "does not bear close examination"¹⁴⁰ for two reasons. One is that "revenue-producing sports are not the financial pillars of the academic structure that their proponents suggest." The other reason, which was more important to the discussion of gender in *Sports Illustrated*, was that "the majority of women are not asking for sports equality on a dollar for dollar basis...their attitude is: let the men spend what they can, but don't ask the women to sacrifice so the men can spend."¹⁴¹ The article went on to quote a women's field hockey coach who said, "If there is half a million for football, there should be enough so girls can have lockers rather than nails on the wall, a trainer to attend to injured ankles, uniforms, good equipment and transportation money."¹⁴² *Sports Illustrated* made an argument for greater equality between men and women's sports by pointing out the discrepancies in athletic budgets.

In 1973, *Sports Illustrated* released a three part series of articles about the status of women's athletics in America, which was likely done in response to the debate centered on women's athletics prompted by the passing of Title IX. One purpose of these articles was to disprove misconceptions about the ability of women to compete in athletics and to prove that there were still many inequalities between male and female athletics.

The first article, "Sport is Unfair to Women," discussed the inequalities of athletic funding between men's and women's sport by focusing on Title IX.¹⁴³ The second article, titled "Are You Being Two-Faced?," discussed the antiquated notion that athletics were harmful to

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Bill Gilbert and Nancy Williamson, "Sport is Unfair to Women," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 38 Issue 21, (May 28, 1973).

girls, and how those ideas had been clinically disproven. The main three ideas that this article sought to rebuke were that “Athletics are physically bad for women; competition may masculinize their appearance and affect their sexual behavior;”¹⁴⁴ that “Women do not play sports well enough to deserve athletic equality; and”¹⁴⁵ that “Girls are not really interested in sports.”¹⁴⁶ As a response to the first charge, the article stated that this belief was simply wrong by citing Dr. Clayton L. Thomas, a Harvard consultant on Human Reproduction, who said, “I do not believe there is evidence available supporting the view that it is possible for healthy women of any age to indulge in a sport which is too strenuous for them. The literature of the past contains many opinions stating that competitive events are harmful for women. There are no data, however, to support these negative views.”¹⁴⁷ The second charge was disproven by use of examples of women and girls that displayed high athletic achievement, but it did mention that there was a skill gap between the two sexes. However, *Sports Illustrated* argued that if women were given greater funding, facilities, training and coaching, the skill gap would narrow greatly. The last point was easily disproven because there was obviously high interest in sports from females, and the article pointed to the emphasis on athletics in the women’s movement to show that women were interested in sport.¹⁴⁸ As *Sports Illustrated* attempted to disprove misconceptions about women’s athletics, it showed a shift in *Sports Illustrated*’s rhetorical approach to gender. These articles were released at a time when reporting of female athletics in *Sports Illustrated* was becoming less gendered and this series of articles showed *Sports Illustrated*’s attempt to put women’s athletics in the spotlight.

¹⁴⁴ Bill Gilbert and Nancy Williamson, “Are You Being Two Faced?,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 38, Issue 22, (June 4, 1973).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

The last of these articles was titled “Programmed to be Losers,” and it argued that the limited access to athletics had created underachievers amongst women because they were not taught the values of sport, like aggressiveness and winning. The author argued that one reason that women were denied equal access to sports was that it was “in the best interest of the male athletic establishment to maintain the existing situation.”¹⁴⁹ Basically, women were not given equal opportunity because it threatened the social hierarchy that placed men on top. By discussing the gendered hierarchy that was present in sports, *Sports Illustrated* raised awareness of inequality in sports. Considering that *Sports Illustrated* contributed to the gendered hierarchy through its gendered rhetoric, it makes sense that the magazine began to use less gendered rhetoric after these articles were published.

Sports Illustrated’s reporting about Title IX and the status of women’s sports in the 1970s showed that there was a profound shift in the way *Sports Illustrated* reported on women’s athletics. No longer was *Sports Illustrated* concerned with things like “Girl Watching” but instead focused much more on reporting the actual athletic achievements and successes of female athletes. However, *Sports Illustrated*’s reporting in the early 1970s did not demonstrate why its attitude towards women’s sports changed. Along with the women’s liberation movement, successful female athletes and Title IX, international competition during the Cold War helped women’s athletics gain greater equality.

Women’s international competition developed throughout the decades leading up to WWII as more and more female events were added to the Olympics.¹⁵⁰ During the 1950s, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) continued to enlarge the women’s sports program,

¹⁴⁹ Bill Gilbert and Nancy Williamson, “Programmed to be Losers,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 38 Issue 23, (June 11, 1973).

¹⁵⁰ Allen Guttman, *Women’s Sports: A History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 163.

adding new events for gymnastics and swimming.¹⁵¹ Between 1960 and 1972, the IOC added more events in track and field and swimming. By 1984, there were almost as many female events as male events, and it was the first time that American media coverage of women's events was comparable to men's. For example, in both the *LA Times* and *NY Times*, women were given 40% of Olympic Games coverage.¹⁵² Beth Allyson Posnack, who contrasted the 1984 Games to the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, summed up this trend by saying:

The American media of 1984 identified...female athletes by their achievements—not by their physical attributes. Clearly, the terms “woman” and “athlete” were no longer separate notions in 1984. Mary Decker was an athlete just as Carl Lewis was an athlete. There was no need to remind the reading public that Mary was also a woman who was capable of dressing up and applying makeup.¹⁵³

This change was something that happened over a long time and that change was evident in *Sports Illustrated's* reporting. One reason for the increased attention given to American women's athletics was that Soviet women had been dominating international competition for years.

During the Cold War, opportunities for women athletes in the Soviet Union were more equal to those of men compared to US women. Young girls who showed athletic talent were encouraged to develop their talent free of charge at various sports schools. In 1974, there were 1,737,900 students at these sports schools and 584,800 were girls, which is a much higher proportional representation than that in the US.¹⁵⁴

Female athletes were not just accepted in the Soviet Union, but lauded and praised. In a poll conducted by Soviet sports writers to select the top sports personalities of 1973, the top five

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 201.

¹⁵² Ibid., 243-246.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 246.

¹⁵⁴ James Riordan, *Soviet Sport Background to the Olympics*, (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 130-132.

spots went to women. The main reason for such high acceptance of female athletics was because of international athletics, an area that the Soviet Union stressed. One Soviet writer said, "Sport is a major area in which women have been able to succeed, and through their success, achieve greater social recognition in wider society."¹⁵⁵ Women made up a sizable portion of the USSR Olympic teams and also contributed greatly to Soviet success in international competition. In 14 athletic matches between the USSR and USA from 1958-1976, the USSR amassed the higher aggregate total of medals 12 times. The Soviet men won more medals than the US men only 4 times though and the Soviet women lost only once to the American women. In other words, if it were not for the women the Soviets would have lost.¹⁵⁶

Sports Illustrated recognized early that female athletics were an area where the USA lagged well behind the Soviets. In an article previewing the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, the author conceded that the USA would probably finish second to the USSR in the total medal count. As he discussed the reasons why the USSR would earn more medals he pointed to a difference in men's and women's sports in America, when he said, "We'll trounce them in men's track and field and they will trounce us in women's track and field, where we don't expect a single first."¹⁵⁷ This quote showed the lack of confidence in American women's sports, which the author expected to be an area that the USSR could easily beat the US. An article from 1965 that previewed a US-Soviet track and field match comments, "Whether our girls have caught up with the Soviets will be disclosed at Kiev this month."¹⁵⁸ This quote shows that, at least according to *Sports Illustrated*, it was important that American female athletes be able to compete with Soviet athletes. Continuing to use women's track and field as an example, in a

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 132.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 132-134.

¹⁵⁷ Martin Kane, "Olympic Roman Holiday," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 13, Issue 7, (Aug 15, 1960).

¹⁵⁸ Joe Jares, "Off to Russia, Without Love," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, (July 12, 1965).

preview of the 1968 Olympics, *Sports Illustrated* said about the American team, “To give you an idea of how good this team is...this is the first time the United States has ever even qualified anyone for the 800 meters.”¹⁵⁹ Together, these three quotes show the development of women’s track and field that seemed to develop directly in response to Soviet dominance in the sport. In 1960, *Sports Illustrated* expected the USSR to dominate track and field. In 1965, *Sports Illustrated* wondered whether or not the US female track and field team had caught up to the Soviets. Then, by 1968, *Sports Illustrated* reflected how dominant the US women’s track and field team looked.

In 1964, Robert F. Kennedy wrote an article for *Sports Illustrated* where he discussed the need for the USA to return to Olympic dominance since the USSR had been beating the USA ever since the Russians joined the Olympic Games in 1952. Kennedy argued that the USA had “skidded steadily for 16 years,”¹⁶⁰ but said that trend could be reversed by “a series of well-organized and well-financed programs”¹⁶¹ that would turn around the US athletic programs. Kennedy went on to say that there was a definite relationship between athletic excellence and national strength and that “the success of Red-bloc countries in the Olympics and other international competitions has given these nations an appearance of strength.”¹⁶² Kennedy laid out a plan to reverse the trend of Soviet dominance over the US, and, in this plan, he said that the US needed to “urge and support greater participation by women in amateur athletics.”¹⁶³ He then went on to say that since women were “playing an increasingly important role in national life,

¹⁵⁹ Bob Ottum, “Dolls on the Move to Mexico,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 29, Issue 10, (Sept 2, 1968).

¹⁶⁰ Robert F. Kennedy, “A Bold Proposal for American Sport,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 4, Issue 4, (July 27, 1964).

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

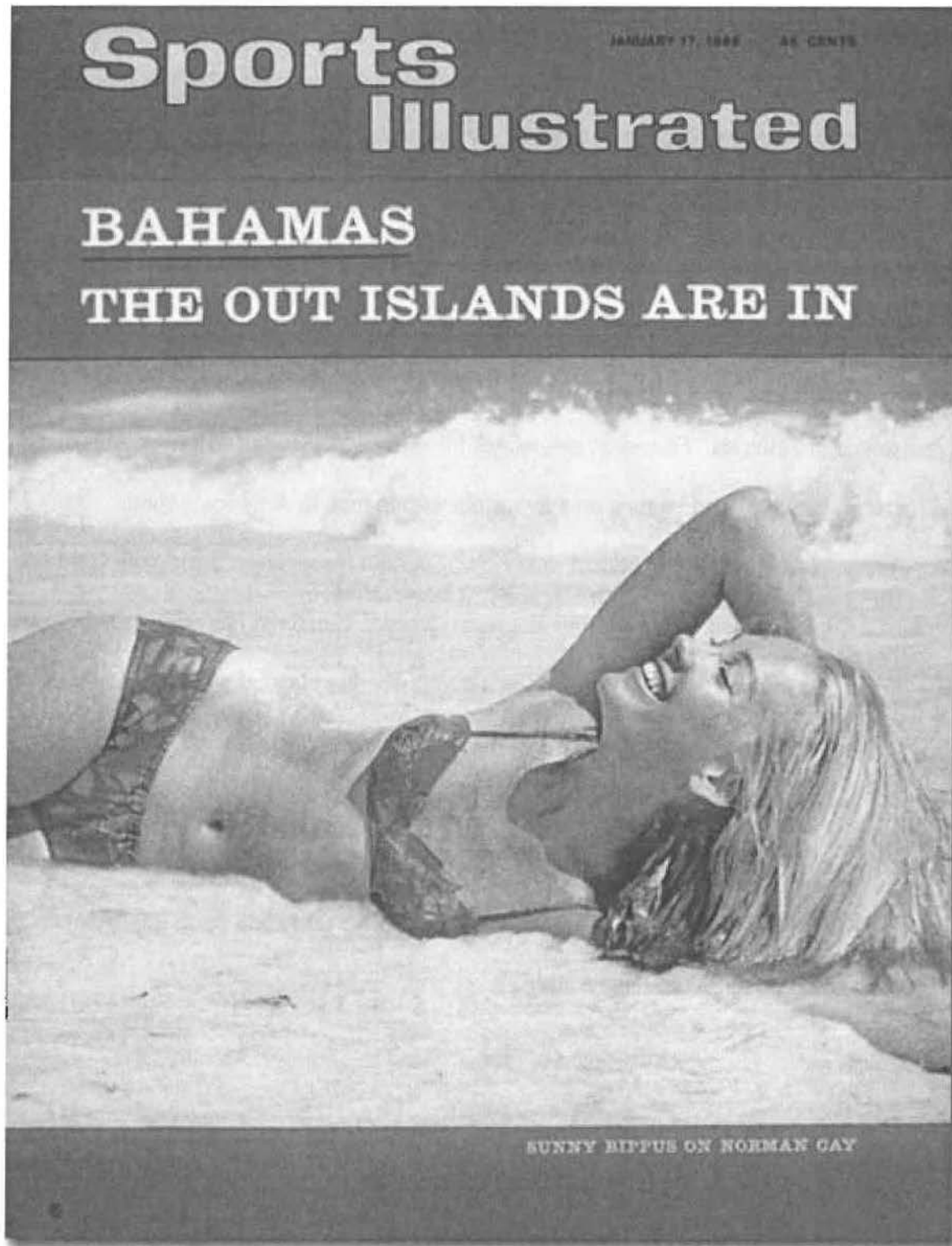
¹⁶³ Ibid.

our country should have more women athletes winning in the Olympics.”¹⁶⁴ This article was important because it showed why *Sports Illustrated*’s reporting of women began to change in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As the desire to beat the Soviets in the total medal count increased, the need for successful female athletes also increased. *Sports Illustrated* realized and started reporting about the need for better female athletics in the 1960s and by the early 1970s the magazine’s overall attitude towards female athletics changed as the magazine became a proponent of equality in women’s sports.

Women’s athletics made a lot of gains during the Cold War as the equality gap in athletics narrowed in America. However, magazines like *Sports Illustrated* still used a lot of gendered rhetoric, which placed women on a lower plane than men in America’s sports hierarchy. *Sports Illustrated* used gendered rhetoric throughout its coverage during the Cold War, but during the 1960s and 1970s the tone began to change. Gendered rhetoric was still used, but *Sports Illustrated* started to report more on the inequalities that plagued women’s athletics and the importance of women’s athletics. One of the main drivers behind *Sports Illustrated*’s realization that women’s sports were important was the medal race between the USA and the USSR in the Olympic Games. The governments of both countries used total medal count as a way to compare the two countries and so female athletics became more and more important as the USA tried to catch up to Soviet female athletes.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Picture 1.¹⁶⁵



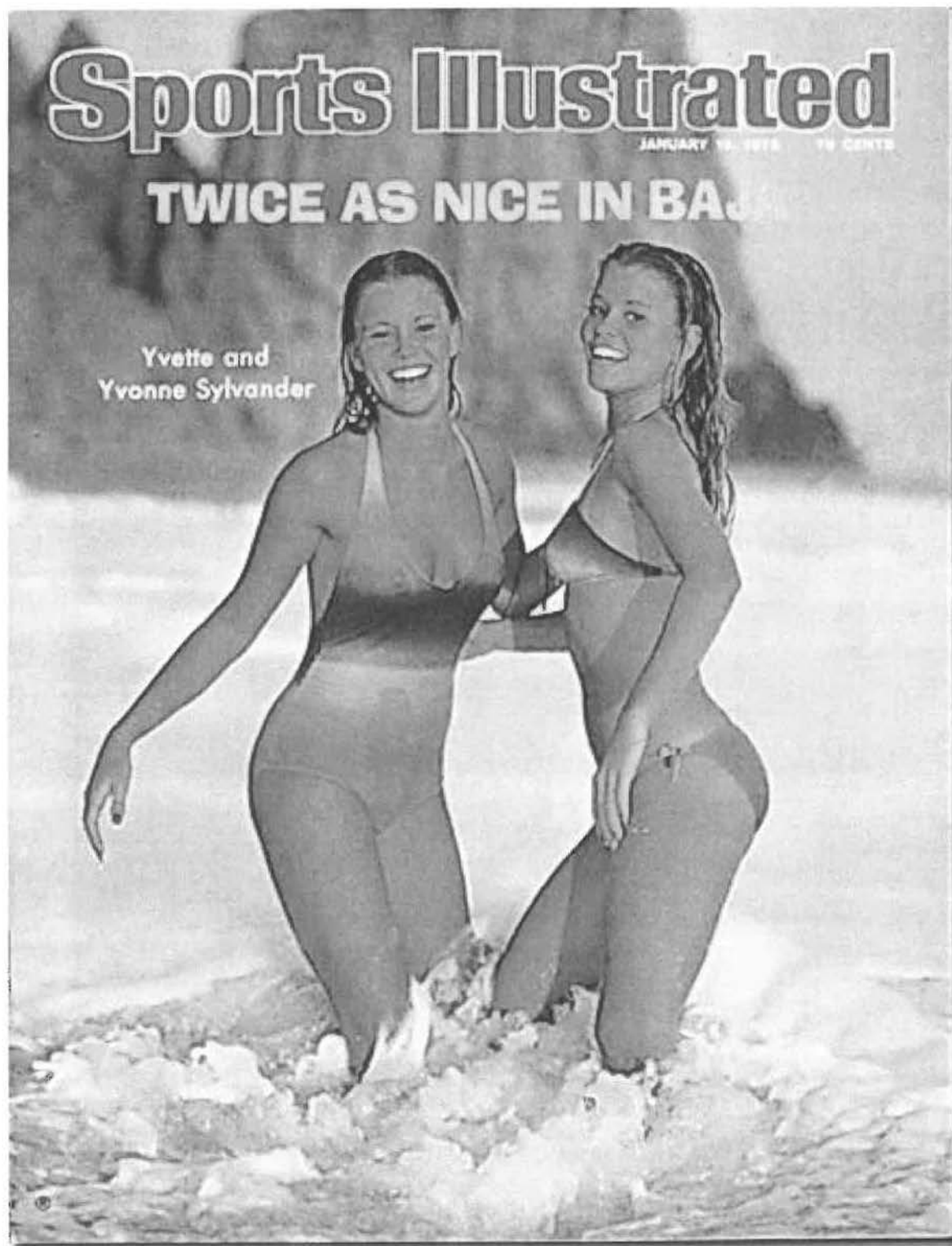
¹⁶⁵ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 24 Issue 3, Jan 17, 1966.

Picture 2.¹⁶⁶



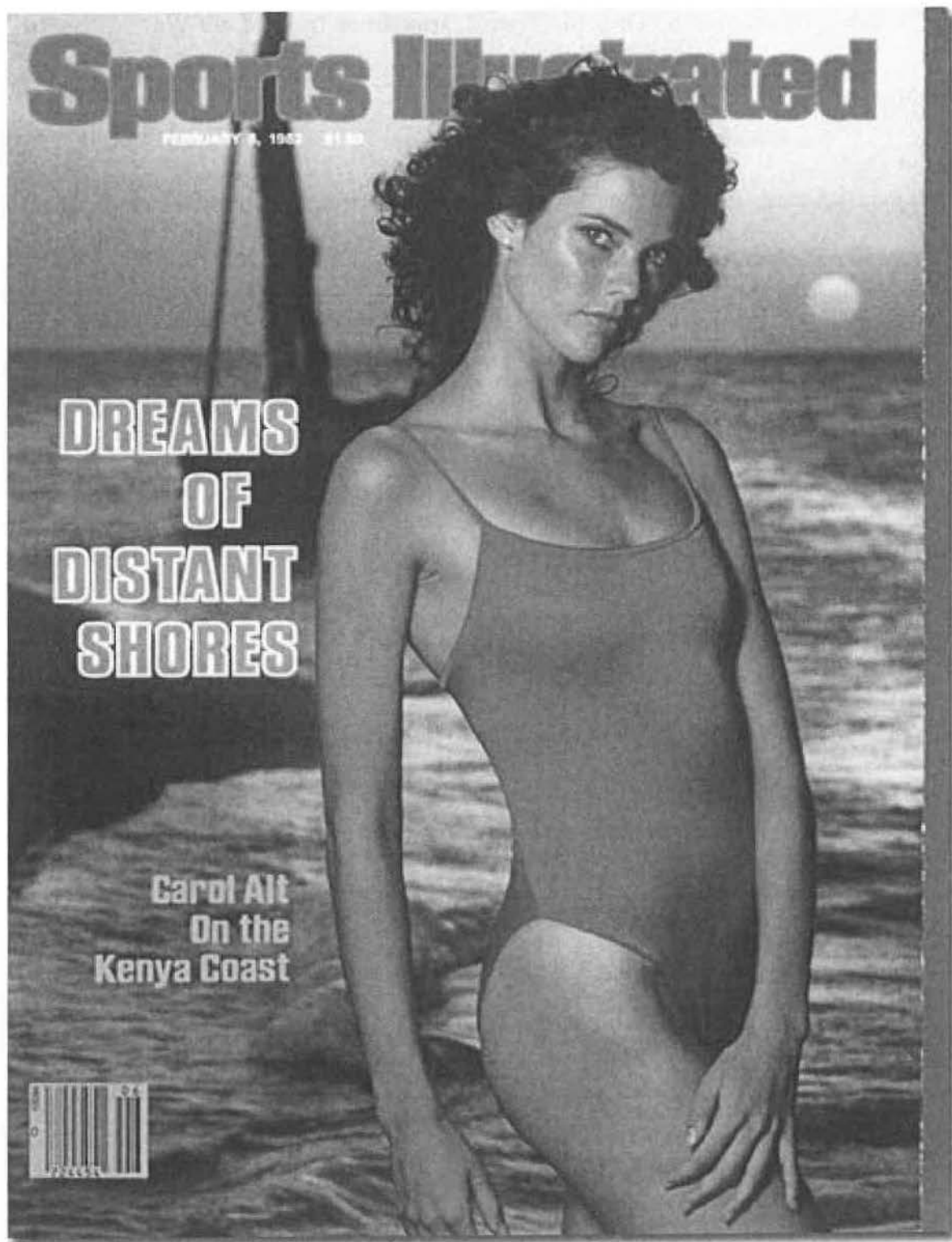
¹⁶⁶ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 26 Issue 3, Jan 16, 1967.

Picture 3.¹⁶⁷



¹⁶⁷ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 44 Issue 3, Jan 19, 1976.

Picture 4.¹⁶⁸



¹⁶⁸ *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, Vol. 56 Issue 5, Feb 5, 1982.

Chapter 3

Sports Illustrated and Olympic Trends Brought on by the Cold War

The Cold War brought many changes to the landscape of international sports as the USSR and the USA competed against each other for national prestige in international competition. *Sports Illustrated* discussed two trends that developed because of the Cold War rivalry, which were: the increased politicization of international athletic competition and the decline of amateurism in the Olympics. The increased politicization of international competition was something that developed over the course of the Cold War, and culminated in boycotts of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games by the USA and USSR, respectively. These were neither the first boycotts nor the first politicized Olympics, but *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of these boycotts shows the degree to which politics shaped US and USSR international sports policy. The second trend was the decline of amateurism in international competition. Originally, the Olympics allowed only amateur athletes to compete, meaning that you could not be a professional athlete and still compete in the Olympics. *Sports Illustrated* faulted both the US and Soviet athletic programs for the decline of amateurism in the Olympics, though it did not frame the decline as a bad thing. Examination of *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of these trends reveals that *Sports Illustrated* tended to favor the political meaning that the Cold War injected into sports when it increased the excitement and quality of international competition. Conversely, *Sports Illustrated* tended to disfavor Cold War politics when it negatively affected international competition.

In 1896, the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens.¹⁶⁹ While the Olympics were meant as an international sporting event that promoted world peace, they quickly began to take on a more political tone. One of the earlier examples of the increased political tone that was developing in the Olympic Games was the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.¹⁷⁰ About the 1936 games, the director of the Holocaust Memorial Museum said, "It's not just about athletes...This was the ultimate manipulation of sport. It was part of the Nazi project."¹⁷¹ The Nazis used the 1936 games to display national power and prestige, and the Nazis manipulated sport to serve a more political purpose. Politics translated to the domain of sports in a few different ways. The first was through sports victories by national teams, which reinforced the image of respect and strength in the world while also acting to legitimize a political regime. Boycotts and bans of sports competitions were also a way that politics entered the international sporting arena. Lastly, disorder and violence was a way politics manifested themselves in sports.¹⁷² One famous example of violence at the Olympics was the fight that broke out between the Hungarian and Soviet water polo teams at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne.¹⁷³

In 1952, Russian athletes competed in the Olympic Games for the first time since 1912. The arrival of the Russian athletes politicized the Olympics even more as the USA and the USSR began to fight a proxy war through international sporting competition. The Soviets earned 21 gold medals at the 1952 Olympics and Soviet newspapers claimed an overall Olympic victory by

¹⁶⁹ Bill Toomey and Barry King, *The Olympic Challenge: 1984*, (Reston, Virginia: Reston Publishing, Inc., 1984) 8-10.

¹⁷⁰ Allison Lincoln, "The Olympic Movement and the End of the Cold War," *World Affairs*, Vol. 157, No. 2 (Fall 1994), 92-97.

¹⁷¹ "The Nazi Olympics," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 85, Issue 5, (July 29, 1996).

¹⁷² Pierre Arnaud, "Sport—A Means of National Representation," from *Sports and International Politics*, Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan, eds., (New York: Spon Press, 1998), 11-12.

¹⁷³ Andre Laguerre, "Down a Road Called Liberty," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 5, Issue 25, (Dec 17, 1956).

virtue of total medal count. The Soviet claim to victory did not sit well with many Americans and a medal race between the USA and the USSR started. The USA and the USSR were the two most consistently dominant teams in the Olympics and so year after year they competed to “win” the Olympics.¹⁷⁴

While the US and USSR fought to win more medals, they were also involved in a Cold War with each other. Though the two countries never faced each other in a military conflict, the two nations fought a proxy war through international athletic competitions. To illustrate how important and related the Olympic Games were to the political actions of both countries, one can look at the 1980 and 1984 Olympic boycotts, which served to show how linked politics and sports became by the end of the end of the Cold War.

The move towards an American boycott started when the Soviets marched 80,000 troops into Afghanistan on December 31, 1979. President Jimmy Carter set a February 20th deadline for Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and when the deadline passed, more than thirty nations decided to boycott the 1980 Olympics. Regarding the decision, President Carter said, “We have no desire to use the Olympics to punish, except the Soviets attach a major degree of importance to the holding of the Olympics in the Soviet Union. In their own propaganda they claim that the willingness of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to let games be held in Moscow is an endorsement of the foreign policy.”¹⁷⁵ President Carter said that the Soviets believed that it would be an endorsement of Soviet foreign policy if the Olympic Games were allowed to be held in Moscow. Not only did the Soviet Union place a lot of political importance on the Olympics but that the USA was using the Olympics as a political weapon against the

¹⁷⁴ Toomey, *The Olympic Challenge*, 47.

¹⁷⁵ Tom Caraccioli and Jerry Caraccioli, *Boycott: Stolen Dreams of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games*, (New Chapter Press, 2008), 65.

Soviets. *Sports Illustrated* reflected President Carter's sentiments when it printed in an article that said, "The Russians will use the 1980 Games to advertise themselves...becoming the Olympics' first Communist host 'may be the most important single event in the Soviet Union since WWII...we intend to deny them...an enormous propaganda victory.'"¹⁷⁶ The article went on to say that while Soviet Union was an aggressor in other years, like in 1956 against Hungary and 1968 against Czechoslovakia, these Olympics were different because "this time the USSR is the host."¹⁷⁷ Together these two quotes show the politicization that was manifesting itself in the 1980s. Politics had been part of many Olympics, but *Sports Illustrated* conveyed that there was something different about the Moscow Games since, according to President Carter, participating in the games would be "an endorsement of the [Soviet] foreign policy."¹⁷⁸ One effect of the 1980 boycott was that it sparked a debate over the relationship between sports and politics in the Olympics.

In response to the boycott, many athletes defended the ideal of pure sport by "reassert[ing] that sports and politics don't mix."¹⁷⁹ Edwin Moses, an Olympic sprinter, said, "Those are our games. The athletes' games."¹⁸⁰ Moses' position reflected the ideal of pure sport well when he said that the Olympics were "the athletes' games." The Olympics were a competition between athletes of different countries rather than between the countries themselves (at least in principle). Moses' attitude displayed the notion that politics should be kept out of the Olympics. However, this attitude did not reflect the realities of Olympic competition during the Cold War where perhaps marathoner Bill Rodgers was more accurate when he said that "I must

¹⁷⁶ Ron Fimrite, "Facing Bear Facts," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 52, Issue 5, (Feb 4, 1980).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Toomey, *The Olympic Challenge*, 60.

¹⁷⁹ Kenny Moore, "The Pawns Make a Move," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 52, Issue 5, Feb 4, 1980.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

accept the inescapable conclusion: I am a pawn.”¹⁸¹ Rodgers seemed to understand the realities of Olympic sport because he understood that the Games could not be separated from politics and that governments were using athletes as “pawns” to display one nation’s superiority over others.

Many athletes were disappointed about the decision to boycott the Olympics. Gene Mills, an Olympic Wrestler said, “The Olympics was always something that was supposed to be a separate thing from politics. It was always said this was a time for everyone to come together to separate politics from sport. President Carter chose not to live up to what the Olympics represents.”¹⁸² Another athlete, Anita DeFrantz led a group of 25 athletes and one US Olympic Committee executive in a class action lawsuit trying to make them able to go. About her lawsuit, DeFrantz said, “It was up to the athletes to make that decision and no one else had the right to make that decision.”¹⁸³ Both of these quotes show a sentiment felt by many Olympic athletes, who were continuing to fight against the politicization of the Olympics. While *Sports Illustrated* did express sympathy for athletes affected by the boycott and lamented the fact that politics had permeated international competition so much, the magazine’s coverage also showed that it understood that sports and politics could not be disconnected.

In one article discussing the 1980 boycott, the author wrote, “The athletes who compete in Moscow run the risk of being remembered, everlastingly, as indeed having been interested only in sport.”¹⁸⁴ *Sports Illustrated* conveyed that the Olympics were about much more than just athletics and that there were also more important things than just athletics. Many times *Sports Illustrated* regretted the fact that the Olympics had taken on such a political tone, like when the magazine printed a quote by United States Olympic Committee (USOC) President Robert J.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Caraccioli, *Boycott*, 52.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 155.

¹⁸⁴ Jerry Krishenbaum, ed., “Scorecard,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 52, Issue 23, (June 2, 1980).

Kane, who, when asked about whether or not he kept a journal of his experiences when the US was deciding whether or not to boycott, said, "No. I couldn't stand to review anything this painful."¹⁸⁵ The fact that the decision to boycott was considered painful shows that there was a lot of grief about the increased politicization of the Olympics. When *Sports Illustrated* framed the boycotts as an unfortunate product of increased politicization, it also showed a departure from the political rhetoric that permeated much of *Sports Illustrated*'s previous Cold War coverage. As Chapter 1 showed, much of the reporting of US-Soviet competition in *Sports Illustrated* had a political slant to it. The 1980 boycott thus not only forced athletes to face the politicization in the Olympics, but also forced *Sports Illustrated* to face it. *Sports Illustrated*'s coverage of these boycotts regretted the fact that Cold War politics had taken the Olympics away through boycotts. No longer were politics a way of injecting excitement into international competition, but instead were negatively affecting it.

Athletes like Gene Mills, Anita DeFrantz and Bill Rodgers showed one attitude towards the 1980 boycott. Their attitudes reflected one interpretation of the meaning of the Olympics, one focused purely on athletic competition and the athletes competing. However, many other athletes understood the increased political meaning of the Olympics. The US boycott was a "powerful signal of world outrage that cannot be hidden from the Soviet people and will reverberate around the globe. Perhaps it will deter future aggression."¹⁸⁶ The boycott was used as a political weapon but it just happened to fall in the arena of athletics. Many athletes understood the political nature of the Olympics even without supporting the boycott, like Craig Beardsley who said, "I began to realize that it was just another political movement. I became

¹⁸⁵ Kenny Moore, "The Decision: No Go on Moscow," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 52, Issue 17, (April 21, 1980).

¹⁸⁶ Martin Barry Vinokur, *More than a Game: Sports and Politics*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 116.

strongly opinionated about trying to separate sports and politics. It will never happen. Sports is one of those great things that bind people together.”¹⁸⁷ The 1980 boycott made some American athletes realize that the Olympics and politics could not be separated. *Sports Illustrated* seemed to recognize the relationship between politics and sports much earlier considering the political and anti-Soviet agenda prevalent in much of their pre-1980 reporting, but did not report negatively on this politicization until Cold War politics actually took the Olympics away.

There were also athletes that supported the boycott, like Craig Masback, an American distance runner, who not only understood the boycott but also supported it, saying “I came in second to a Russian athlete and as we were coming down the stretch the crowd cheered like crazy because a Russian was beating an American. The Olympics are a show of the modern socialist state. They can make a point about what they can offer. Given that reality, I see a boycott as a very positive strike against the Soviet Union.”¹⁸⁸ Another perspective was Jeff Taylor’s, who said, “I came to see how the Olympics and politics have been connected since the beginning, that it is blind to pretend the games exist in a vacuum. Now I am amazed at myself. The Olympics have been my goal for nine years, yet I’m saying we shouldn’t go.”¹⁸⁹ These two quotes show the differences in thought between many athletes, as some agreed and some did not agree with the boycott. However, whether or not athletes agreed with the decision or not, many of the quotes by American athletes show that the 1980 boycott made them think about the Olympics in a more political way than they had before. American athletes beginning to think more about the relationship between politics and the Olympics is contrasted with *Sports*

¹⁸⁷ Caraccioli, *Boycott*, 71.

¹⁸⁸ Vinokur, *More than a Game: Sports and Politics*, 117.

¹⁸⁹ Moore, “The Pawns Make a Move.”

Illustrated, which had been writing about international competition in a political and Cold War framework since its first issue.

The 1980 boycott forced American athletes, who had previously not thought about the relationship between sports and politics, to confront the increased politicization of the Olympics. *Sports Illustrated*, through its politically framed reporting, had fused sports and politics since the beginning, but by 1980 the magazine's coverage lamented the increased politicization. The 1980 boycott took the Olympics away from both American athletes and *Sports Illustrated*, which forced the magazine to reflect on the increased politicization of international competition that had now hurt international athletic competition.

The 1980 Olympic boycott was not the first boycott during the Olympics, nor was it the last, but it was very important because it further showed the relationship between the Olympics and politics. Many American athletes, who had not thought about this relationship before, were now coming to the realization that sports and politics were intertwined. Juan Antonio Samaranch, the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) conveyed that message in his closing remarks of the 1980 Games. Instead of calling upon the youth of countries to assemble in four years again, as was customary, he departed from the required text and begged "the sportsmen of the world to unite in peace before the holocaust descends."¹⁹⁰ This quote conveyed the message that nations should use the Games as a tool for world peace instead of for furthering political agendas.

The boycotts effects were not only limited to the 1980 Olympic Games, but also to the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, which the USSR boycotted. Threats to the USSR's participation in the 1984 Games came when it began questioning the Americans' organization of the games.

¹⁹⁰ Caraccioli, *Boycott*, 62.

These concerns were coupled with complaints about security and anti-Soviet demonstrations, specifically a group called "Ban the Soviets Coalition" which was formed with the goal of keeping the USSR out of the 1984 Games.¹⁹¹ In April 1983, the Soviets accused the Americans of politicizing the Olympic movement through the "organized effort by anti-Soviet Groups, supported by the FBI and State Department."¹⁹² Also, many Soviet officials were offended when, in August of 1983, President Reagan condemned the Soviets for shooting down a Korean airliner that strayed into Soviet airspace and resulted in the deaths of 269 people. President Reagan said that the deaths of the people on board "were the result of the Soviet Union violating every concept of human rights."¹⁹³ This speech only further antagonized the Soviet Union and contributed to the Soviet's notion that the US was furthering anti-Soviet sentiments.

Historian David Kanin said that "The USSR lost a significant amount of international legitimacy on the Olympic question" because of the boycott and so the likelihood of retaliation was high.¹⁹⁴ The Soviet Union had placed much importance on the Games being held in Moscow in 1980 and when the US and other countries boycotted it decreased the legitimacy of those Games since many of the more successful countries, in terms of international competition, did not compete. The Soviets officially withdrew from the Olympics on May 8, 1984 and according to Peter Ueberroth, author of *Made in America* and the President of the Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, the biggest reason for their boycott was retaliation against the Americans for the 1980 boycott, though the Soviets never said so

¹⁹¹ Vinokur, *More than a Game*, 120-123.

¹⁹² Ibid., 123.

¹⁹³ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on KAL 007," (Sept 5, 1983), <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/historicspeeches/reagan/kal007.html>

¹⁹⁴ Allen Guttman, "Cold War and the Olympics," *International Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Sport in World Politics (Autumn, 1988), 554-568.

themselves.¹⁹⁵ Even if retaliation was not the main factor in deciding to boycott the 1984 games, *Sports Illustrated* gave the impression that it was.

Sports Illustrated's coverage of the 1984 boycott had a different tone than the magazine's coverage of the 1980 boycott. The coverage of the 1980 boycott focused on the notion that one could no longer possibly separate international athletics and politics. While the magazine lamented the fact that sports were no longer separate from politics, it conveyed the message that the American boycott was at least somewhat justified in lieu of Soviet foreign policy in Afghanistan. However, coverage of the 1984 boycott focused more on how the boycott was an act of retaliation, would hurt the quality of the Games even more than the 1980 boycott, and could hasten the demise of the Games.

One article, titled "Doleful Days for the Games," conveyed the idea that the Soviet boycott was mostly retaliation to the 1980 boycott. The article summarized the events that led to the boycott while also relying heavily on Peter Ueberroth's perspective. In this article, *Sports Illustrated* framed the 1984 boycott as retaliation in many ways. One way the article framed the Soviet boycott as retaliation was by making it seem as if the reasons that the Soviets gave for the boycott were not the real reasons for the boycott. The author wrote, "There are many theories as to the Soviets' real motivation for the pullout. The most common one, simply stated, is, 'It's payback time.'"¹⁹⁶ Not only did *Sports Illustrated* explicitly say that the reason for the Soviet boycott was payback, but it also made it seem as if the other reasons were not real. The author went on to write that "The reasons that the USSR gave were almost certainly excuses rather than

¹⁹⁵ Vinokur, *More than a Game*, 123.

¹⁹⁶ Kenneth Reich, "Doleful Day for the Games," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 60, Issue 20, (May 21, 1984).

real objections.”¹⁹⁷ Again, *Sports Illustrated* conveyed that the USSR’s only real reason for boycotting the Games was retaliation. The author also quoted Ueberroth, who remembered something said to him shortly after the US decided to boycott the 1980 Games, when he said, “One of their dignitaries said, ‘You sometimes call us the bear, the big bear. This time you can call us the elephant because we don’t forget.”¹⁹⁸ Ueberroth suggested that the Soviet dignitary was offended by the boycott and the quote displayed an ominous tone that there would be some type of payback.

Sports Illustrated also reported that the boycott was a product of deteriorating Soviet-American relations and that the boycott was a conscious signal by the Soviets to show how bad those relations were. The author wrote that “the chill dates back to the ’80 boycott, but the current Administration has done nothing to improve the situation.”¹⁹⁹ When *Sports Illustrated* argued that the boycott was a product of deteriorating relations, it still conveyed a message that the Soviet boycott was retaliatory in nature. Discussing the 1980 boycott, *Sports Illustrated*’s coverage depicts frustration over the level of politicization in the Olympics, which conveyed an attitude that it was unfortunate how often Cold War politics manifested themselves in international competition. By 1984, *Sports Illustrated*’s coverage seemed completely fed up with Cold War interruptions to international competition. By framing the Soviet boycott as retaliatory, it conveyed the message that this boycott was brought on almost completely because of Cold War politics and rivalries.

Sports Illustrated’s coverage of the 1984 boycott also argued that the 1984 boycott would be more harmful to competition than the 1980 boycott. One article, titled “A Decline in the Gold

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Standard,” talked about how “The Soviet-led boycott will so deplete a number of competitions in L.A.”²⁰⁰ For example, the author wrote that “the boycott will wreak havoc on some sports that figured to be truly competitive.”²⁰¹ *Sports Illustrated* also mentioned that the “pullout by socialist bloc countries figures to lower the quality of competition in L.A. even more than the US-led walkout did in Moscow in 1980.”²⁰² The 1984 boycott, according to *Sports Illustrated*, was even more harmful to competition than the 1980 one. *Sports Illustrated* furthered this argument when, in another article, the author wrote that “women’s track and field in Los Angeles will decide nothing without the Eastern Europeans.”²⁰³ *Sports Illustrated* thus made it seem like the Soviet boycott had made the 1984 Olympics almost irrelevant since the highly skilled athletes of Eastern Europe were not competing. *Sports Illustrated* depicted these boycotts as ruining the Olympics and thus criticized them. Considering the political tone present in much of *Sports Illustrated*’s reporting, the fact that the magazine condemned these boycotts shows a slight contradiction to *Sports Illustrated*’s reporting. *Sports Illustrated* was perfectly content to use the Cold War as a means of giving increased meaning to international competition, which created more excitement for the games and thus could mean greater interest in the magazine’s reporting on the Olympics. However, when the Cold War ruined sporting events, *Sports Illustrated* was quick to criticize the political nature of the Olympics. Considering that *Sports Illustrated* was an American sports magazine, it was no wonder that the magazine’s coverage would criticize events that either removed American athletes from sporting events or that diminished the significance. The 1980 boycott removed American athletes from the Olympics,

²⁰⁰ Robert Sullivan, “A Decline in the Gold Standard,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 60, Issue 20, (May 21, 1984).

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Jerry Krishenbaum, “The 1984 Olympics,” *Sports Illustrated*, (July 18, 1984).

²⁰³ Kenny Moore, “Oh, For the Days of a County Fair,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 60, Issue 20, (May 21, 1984).

which meant there would be less interest in the Olympics. Less interest in the Olympics would mean there was less interest in *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of the Olympics. In 1984, the boycott removed the US' main rival from the Games, which again could reduce interest in the Olympics. Considering that less interest in the Olympics directly affected *Sports Illustrated*, it was no wonder that the magazine would not be in favor of the boycotts.

Consecutive boycotts in 1980 and 1984 by two of the most important countries to international competition made many at *Sports Illustrated* wonder if the Soviet boycott would bring about an end to the Olympics. In one *Sports Illustrated* article, US marathoner Alberto Salazar said about the 1984 boycott, "It's going to be a death blow for the Olympics if the Russians carry through. It's happened too many times in a row, now."²⁰⁴ Similarly, James Worrall, an IOC member, said of the boycott, "I must say a recurrence of this type seems like a tragic blow. This certainly brings us pretty damn close to the end."²⁰⁵ Barry Frank, a consultant to Seoul for the 1988 Games said that if there was another boycott in 1988 it would probably be the end of the Olympics.²⁰⁶ These quotes conveyed the message that not only was the 1984 boycott more harmful than the 1980 one in terms of athletic competition, but that the 1984 boycott could lead to the end of the Olympics. *Sports Illustrated* did not necessarily blame the Soviets for the potential Olympic demise, but instead blamed the trend of boycotts and increased politicization of the Games that had taken place over the past few decades leading up to the 1980 and 1984 boycotts. As *Sports Illustrated* pondered the future of the Olympics in lieu of the 1980 and 1984 boycotts, it showed that the Games had become even more politicized by the time of these boycotts than it had been before.

²⁰⁴ William Oscar Johnson, "Is there Life after Los Angeles?" *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 60, Issue 20, (May 21, 1984).

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Looking at the coverage of these two boycotts, it was evident that politics had infiltrated the Games in a way that hurt competition rather than increased excitement. William Simon, a former USOC President, condemned the Soviet Union and the US for using politics to interfere with the Games. He said, "The most pressing question is whether the Olympic movement can survive repeated invasions by governments that want to make participation an adjunct of foreign policy. Hitler's exaltation of Aryan superiority at the 1936 Games in Berlin seems mild in comparison with more recent acts...the 1980 American led withdrawal...and now the Soviet boycott."²⁰⁷ This quote sums up the trend of increased politicization of the Games during the Cold War that was evident in *Sports Illustrated's* reporting. Simon said that the 1980 and 1984 boycotts made Hitler's 1936 Berlin Games look mild, which again shows the increased politicization of the Olympics.

Boycotts and the increased politicization of the Olympics were not the only trends brought on by the US-Soviet rivalry. The decline of amateurism was also affected by the Cold War rivalry between the US and the USSR. The decline of amateurism eventually led to the rise of professionalism in the Olympics. Since a professional athlete's job is athletics, the rise of professionalism also meant that better trained and more highly skilled athletes would be allowed to compete in the Olympics. *Sports Illustrated* conveyed the idea that both the US and the USSR had been sending what were basically professional athletes to the Olympics anyway under the guise of amateurism, which thus contributed to the decline of amateurism.

One *Sports Illustrated* article, titled "A Question of the Soul," discussed the reasons behind the amateur ideal in Olympic sports. The author of the article, Charles W. Thayer, argued that the tradition of amateurism was a byproduct of the English notion of a "gentleman

²⁰⁷ Guttman, "Cold War and the Olympics."

amateur.”²⁰⁸ The British upper classes did not want to be associated with the “professionals who performed to amuse the well-heeled upper classes and to give them a spectacle on which to be their money.”²⁰⁹ Many of the founders of the IOC grew up in the context of a “gentleman amateur” and so they developed the Olympics “with unquestioned acceptance of the amateur creed.”²¹⁰

Thayer continued his article by saying that it was difficult to define amateurism and that even members of the IOC have trouble doing that. Avery Brundage, a former President of the IOC from 1952-1972, said about amateurism, “It is a thing of the spirit, and hence is very difficult to define.”²¹¹ However, the IOC did define amateurism in Rule 26 of the Olympic rules as “one who participates and always has participated in sport solely for pleasure and for the physical, mental or social benefits he derives therefrom, and to whom participation in sport is nothing more than recreation without material gain of any kind, direct or indirect.”²¹² This rule was supplemented by a statement that “athletes subsidized by governments, educational institutions or by businesses are not amateurs but “pseudo amateurs,” and hence ineligible for amateur competition.”²¹³ In addition to these rules, the rule also did not allow athletes to be given posts in the army or civil services, opposed training camps lasting more than two weeks, and forbid athletic scholarships.²¹⁴ The article continued to say that even the Greeks eventually subsidized their athletes and showered them with gifts, “just as the Russians now are doing openly and virtually every Western country in secret.” This article was printed in 1960, but

²⁰⁸ Charles W. Thayer, “A Question of Soul,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 13, Issue 7, (Aug 15, 1960).

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

Sports Illustrated's coverage throughout the Cold War displays the hypocrisy with which the IOC policed these amateur rules. Since US and Soviet athletes were allowed to compete in the Games while not adhering to amateur rules, the two countries contributed to the decline of amateurism in the Olympics.

Athletics in the USSR developed at a quick pace because of two distinguishing features of the communist system of athletics, its central organization and its use for specific socio-political objectives. Sports were controlled by the state, and thus sport and politics were inseparable in the USSR. The policy of each sport's governing body was determined by the ruling party, and so sports were dependent on and guided by the government.²¹⁵ Having a national sports program run by the government created advantages because the government had the ability to concentrate resources on certain priorities, like Olympic success.²¹⁶

The Soviet athletic program paid its players, provided them with the best facilities, equipment, and coaches, and required athletes to train year round instead of working. These aspects of the Soviet athletic program provided reasons why *Sports Illustrated* partly faulted the USSR for the decline of amateurism. Soviet athletes that were subsidized by governments, according to the Olympic rules on amateurism, could not be considered amateurs. However, as *Sports Illustrated* points out, Soviet athletes were subsidized by the government. In one article about Soviet hockey players, the author wrote, "Like all important Soviet athletes, they had emerged from a state-sponsored program."²¹⁷ Often when discussing Soviet athletes, *Sports*

²¹⁵ James Riordan, *Sport, Politics and Communism*, (New York: Manchester University Press, 1991), 64.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

²¹⁷ Robert H. Boyle, "Red Icemen Come, See and Conquer," *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 10, Issue 2, (Jan 12, 1959).

Illustrated made mention of them being subsidized by the state, which was something directly opposed to amateur rules.

Like the Soviet Union, international competition provided a way for America to display national prestige and the superiority of its ideology. In 1960, President John F. Kennedy wrote an article in *Sports Illustrated* titled “The Soft American” about the importance of sports in America. His discussion of sports was very similar to discussion of the GTO program and the role of sports in the USSR, where sports are used to socialize people and keep people ready to meet any threat. JFK said, “Physical vigor of our citizens is one of America's most precious resources. If we waste and neglect this resource...we will destroy much of our ability to meet the great and vital challenges which confront our people.”²¹⁸ He goes on to say “Our struggles against aggressors throughout our history have been won on the playgrounds and corner lots and fields of America.”²¹⁹ Both of these quotes show that JFK placed sport in high regard in keeping the citizens of America ready to meet challenges which may come, a sentiment echoed in the Soviet program.

College athletics provided a good example for how the US contributed to the decline of amateurism. One way that college athletics contributed to the decline of amateurism was by offering athletic scholarships. Olympic amateur rules stated that athletes could not be subsidized by educational institutions or receive athletic scholarships. In one *Sports Illustrated* article, Billie Jean King was quoted as saying, “I have trouble interpreting college basketball players as amateurs. No matter how small it is, if they are given financial aid for excelling at sport, calling

²¹⁸ President-Elect John F. Kennedy, “The Soft American,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 13, Issue 26, (Dec 26, 1960).

²¹⁹ Ibid.

them amateurs is incorrect.”²²⁰ King was right that college athletes could not be considered amateurs based on the Olympic code since they are given scholarships for excelling at athletics.

Many authors in *Sports Illustrated* blame both the USA and the USSR for the decline in amateurism. One article, discussing the hypocrisy of amateurism in the Olympics, pointed to a few reasons for the decline in amateurism. The first was nationalism: “Rampant nationalism has increased international rivalry to the point of making the will to win in sports a national policy...scarcely a single country does not in one form or another give financial assistance to its team in the Olympics to uphold its national prestige.”²²¹ This point was one that could be attributed to both the US and the USSR, both of whom were very focused on international athletic victories as the Olympics increased in political meaning. The emphasis placed on international competition meant that each country gave more and more financial assistance to athletes in order to compete with each other.

The article continued, “Commercialism has been an even greater ill than nationalism, especially in the United States. When shrewd businessmen discovered...the money making possibilities of spectator sports, they exploited them ruthlessly. To attract large audiences they went after the famous athletes...and their cold hard cash, offered above or under the table, dampened many an amateur spirit.”²²² This point was attributed to the US and college athletics, where schools spent more and more on athletic programs in order to display a university’s prestige. As colleges and universities spent more on athletic programs and gave more athletic scholarships, college athletes violated amateur rules in the Olympics. According to one British official, “When we suggest to Russian officials that they aren’t complying with the rules, they

²²⁰ Curry Kirkpatrick, “The Ball in Two Different Courts,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 37, Issue 26, (Dec 25, 1972).

²²¹ Thayer, “A Question of the Soul.”

²²² Ibid.

merely point to American college athletics and laugh. [American] athletic scholarships are a far more pernicious evil than Russia's state amateurs."²²³ With this quote, *Sports Illustrated* pointed to a lack of amateurism that was also present in US athletics.

While the decline of amateurism was a trend that happened over the course of the Cold War, *Sports Illustrated* reported about the hypocrisy of amateurism since the 1960s. It makes sense that *Sports Illustrated* would begin reporting about amateurism early for a few reasons. One reason is that many athletes were "shamateurs" even in the 1950s and 1960s. Another reason is that *Sports Illustrated* needed people to be interested in sports to be able to sell magazines. Allowing professional athletes to compete in the Olympics would, theoretically, improve the competition and thus increase interest. Increased interest in the Olympics would mean increased interest in *Sports Illustrated's* Olympic reporting. Again, *Sports Illustrated's* stance on a Cold War driven trend was framed by how the trend would affect *Sports Illustrated*.

The decline of amateurism in the Olympic led to a rise in professionalism as people became more and more aware of the "shamateurism" that permeated international competition. One reason that professionals were eventually allowed to compete in the Olympics was that it was impossible for actual amateurs to compete with the subsidized athletes of the USA and USSR given their advantages in funding. A former Olympic track star from France said, "Not 20% of the Olympic track champions are genuine amateurs."²²⁴ Initially, the IOC did not want to turn on its foundation of amateurism just because a few athletes weren't following the rules, but in 1986, the amateur rule was overturned and professional athletes were permitted to compete. About the decision to allow professional athletes, *Sports Illustrated* said:

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

After decades of moralistic breast-beating over the corruption that money supposedly imparts to the essence of sport, the Olympic movement has at last openly—even *proudly*—capitulated to the formerly unthinkable. It has embraced the ways of professional sport and accepted the means of the marketplace as being the only logical vehicles by which the Olympic Ideal can be transported, alive and thriving, through the rest of the 20th century and on into the 21st.²²⁵

Sports Illustrated noted that the transition to professionalism had taken place over a number of years thanks in part to athletic programs that violated Olympic amateur rules, like those in America and Russia, but also for other reasons. One other reason was the realization that the Olympics were a big business. Allowing professionals would allow for more merchandising and commercialization, would create new markets and sales opportunities for commercial television, would allow for greater sports professionalism and higher quality games, and would allow the IOC to stop turning a blind eye to the professionalism that was prevalent amongst the top athletes. “The new Olympic pragmatism is a powerfully positive force. It injects a stream of cash and commercial energy into the Games, and it pretty much eliminates the smog of shamateurism,”²²⁶ *Sports Illustrated* reported. It is no wonder that *Sports Illustrated* would be in favor of something that would inject “energy into the Games” since increased energy would likely mean increased interest. Increased interest in international competition would likely then mean increased interest in *Sports Illustrated*. Richard W. Pound, an executive in the IOC summed up the decision to allow professionals by saying, “What we want is the world’s best athletes competing in the Olympic games. We do not want a better quality of athletes competing in a world championship than those competing in the Olympics. Professional or amateur—we want the best.”²²⁷ The Eastern bloc was against the inclusion of professionals because they did

²²⁵ William Oscar Johnson, “Goodbye, Olive Wreaths; Hello, Riches and Reality,” *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 66, Issue 6, (Feb 9, 1987).

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

not actually consider themselves professional. One reason that they did not consider themselves professional was that being a professional denoted a certain bourgeois quality, which went against communist ideals. Also, the inclusion of professional athletes would mean more competition for the USSR in international athletics.

Sports Illustrated pointed to both the US and the Soviets for the decline of amateurism, but notes that the decline was a positive trend. Hort Dassler, a former Adidas executive, said, "Pure amateur status hasn't existed for many Olympics, no matter what sport you're looking at. From the time they are children, big talents are prepared systematically, most of them fully supported whether they live in the East or the West."²²⁸ *Sports Illustrated* reflected this notion that amateurism had not existed in the Olympics for a long time early in its reporting. This quote reiterated that pure amateurism had not existed in the Olympics because athletes were developed and subsidized from the time when they were very young in both the East and the West.

Two trends in international sports affected directly by the Cold War were the increased politicization of the Olympics, which culminated in the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Boycotts and the decline of amateurism. Both the USSR and USA were largely responsible for these trends, a sentiment echoed in *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of these events. The trend of politicization in the Olympics was not something distinct to the US and USSR rivalry, but the Cold War increased the politicization even more. Politics and international competition became so intertwined by 1984 that many felt the Olympic Games may not survive. The US and USSR also both contributed to the decline of amateurism in the Olympics because their athletic programs and athletes violated many of the Olympic rules on amateurism. *Sports Illustrated's* reporting about these two trends displayed the magazine's Cold War sympathies. The magazine tended to

²²⁸ Ibid.

favor Cold War politics when it injected energy and interest into athletic competition. However, when Cold War politics threatened or took away international competition the magazine reported negatively about the increased politicization of international competition.

Conclusion

Sports Illustrated provides a good case study for the relationship between the Cold War and international competition because the magazine developed during the Cold War and was one of the most important sports magazines in America. *Sports Illustrated* portrayed the USSR, Soviet athletic program, and communism in a negative light. Before the 1980s, *Sports Illustrated* also depicted Soviet athletes negatively, but during the 1980s began to frame Soviet athletes as trapped in an oppressive system. *Sports Illustrated* took advantage of the relationship between sports and politics to frame international competition as a proxy war for the Cold War and used the politics of Cold War rivalries to generate interest in international athletic competition.

Sports Illustrated tended to reflect positively on Cold War driven trends that would increase the interest in and quality of international athletics. The decline of amateurism and the rise of professionalism was one trend that *Sports Illustrated* portrayed positively. The rise of professional athletes would likely increase the quality of the Olympics, which would likely generate more interest in the Games. Conversely, *Sports Illustrated* did not favor the 1980 and 1984 boycotts because they threatened international competition. *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of these boycotts lamented the increased politicization of the Olympic Games, while noting that perhaps sports and politics could not be separated. *Sports Illustrated's* reporting suggested that the level of politicization became so severe that the Olympic Games may not have been able to survive another boycott in 1988. It is likely that *Sports Illustrated* framed the boycotts negatively because diminished quality of competition or non-participation by American athletes would negatively affect interest in the Olympics and thus negatively affect interest in *Sports Illustrated's* Olympic coverage.

Sports Illustrated's coverage of women's athletics again showed trends brought on by the Cold War. The desire to beat the Soviets in total medal count prompted Americans to begin to focus more on women's athletics in the 1960s and 1970s. *Sports Illustrated* reflected the increased importance of women's sports through a shift in its reporting in the early 1970s. *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of women's athletics during the Cold War was mostly positive, which again shows that *Sports Illustrated* favored Cold War politics when they increased interest in international athletics. An increase in women's participation in sports would likely mean an increase in interest by women of sports reporting. As women's sports developed and became more prominent, *Sports Illustrated* began to use less gendered language, promote women's equality, and convey the importance of women to Olympic success.

Sports Illustrated used the relationship between sports and Cold War politics to frame Soviet athletics as different from American athletics. Framing international competition as vital to America's success and prestige took advantage of Cold War politics to generate interest in international athletics. Similarly, *Sports Illustrated* positively reported on the trends of a decline in amateurism and a rise in women's athletics. Both of these trends, partly driven by Cold War rivalries, would likely generate more interest and higher quality athletic competition, which would in turn create more interest in *Sports Illustrated's* reporting. *Sports Illustrated* reported negatively on trends that would harm international competition like Olympic boycotts because those trends would diminish interest in what *Sports Illustrated* was writing about. *Sports Illustrated* tended to be in favor of the relationship between Cold War politics and sports when it was beneficial to the magazine. Cold War politics that harmed athletics were reported about negatively as *Sports Illustrated* lamented the increased politicization that permeated international competition.

